



Testimony in Support of
**LD 898 – An Act to Provide Incentives to Unemployed
to Become Part of the Caregiver Workforce**

January 31, 2022

Senator Daughtry, Representative Sylvester, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing, my name is Laurie Belden and I am a resident of Durham. I serve as the executive director of the Home Care & Hospice Alliance of Maine -- a membership organization representing home care, home health care and hospice providers across the State. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 898 and thank you to Representative Fay for bringing this legislation and subsequent amendment forward.

The Home Care & Hospice Alliance is a network of home care and hospice providers across our State delivering home-based care to older adults and disabled individuals of all ages - allowing them to stay in their home and community. Annually, our provider members deliver care to more than 45,000 clients in their residences across Maine, traveling more than 20 million miles. Collectively, home care, home health care and hospice members employ more than 15,000 staff – making our sector a large part of the healthcare continuum, with significant contributions to Maine’s economy.

LD 898 would establish the Essential Support Workforce Advisory Committee, which would advise the Legislature and the Governor on Maine’s essential support workforce shortage and collaborate with the State to find solutions to this problem.

Home Care & Hospice Alliance member agencies have appreciated being involved in the ongoing work to address Maine’s direct care worker shortage, including through participation in the Commission to Study Long-term Care Workforce Issues. Home care providers struggle with the ongoing challenge of recruiting and retaining adequate numbers of essential support workers. As a result, older Mainers, people with disabilities, and others in need of care at times go without the services they need. The Alliance is supportive of the Legislature’s recent work to address the workforce challenge, including raising direct care worker pay to 125% of the minimum wage. To build off this progress and continue to improve recruitment and retention of people in this important field of work, we support the Essential Support Workforce Advisory Committee as outlined in the sponsor’s amendment.

Thank you for considering this important legislation.

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