

Supporting Workers, Strengthening Care: A Plan for Maine's Future

LD 1932: An Act to Support Essential Support Workers and Enhance Workforce Development

The Importance of This Bill:

Maine's economy and communities depend on a strong, reliable direct care workforce. LD 1932 Sponsored by Speaker Fecteau provides solutions to ensure that every Mainer in need of care and support services has access to consistent and predictable care from skilled, valued workers — no matter the setting. This legislation supports workers, enhances care quality, and addresses future workforce needs.

1. Increases Essential Care Reimbursement Rates and Worker Pay

Adjusts reimbursement rates to support wage and benefit cost increases as the minimum wage rises each year, maintaining reimbursement rates at 140% of the minimum wage for essential care and support workers.

2. Creates a Wage Floor

When MaineCare Direct Care Service rates are adjusted to support labor costs at 140% of minimum wage, essential support workers providing services reimbursed by a MaineCare or other state-funded program will be required to be paid a minimum of 125% of the state minimum wage.

3. Uses Technology to Improve Care

Creates a plan to use smart technology to fill care gaps and make services more efficient.

4. Provides Better Training

Develops a consistent training program for all care workers, helping them gain skills and deliver high-quality care.

5. Improves Oversight

Strengthens a state committee to keep track of progress in reducing care gaps and improving services.

6. Uses Data to Empower Action

Collects and analyzes data to understand where care gaps exist and to plan better services.

7. Plans for the Future

Looks ahead to the needs of Maine's aging population and ensures the state is prepared to meet growing care demands.

How This Bill Benefits Maine people:

- **Supports Maine's Economy:** Ensures a sustainable workforce and quality care for Maine people.
- **Improves Worker Stability:** Provides fair wages and professional development opportunities.
- **Enhances Care Delivery:** Uses technology and data to bridge gaps and optimize resources.
- **Prepares for the Future:** Anticipates workforce and care demands for an aging population.

Join Us in Supporting Maine's Care Workforce!

What Do the Data Tell Us?

Undervaluing care work imposes significant public costs on our state, on workers, and Mainers who need care.

1 in 5

Essential support workers estimated to be enrolled in SNAP, formerly known as food stamps, due to low wages.

23,500

At least this many hours per week of home care for older adults went unserved in 2024 due to the workforce shortage.

8,000

The estimated # of Mainers who have dropped out of the labor force due to direct care responsibilities.

\$1 Billion

The amount Maine is forfeiting in economic activity because fewer workers are contributing taxes.

This comprehensive bill ensures Mainers receive the care they need, strengthens our communities, and invests in a future-ready workforce. Let's build a foundation for care that supports all Maine residents.

WHO ARE ESSENTIAL CARE & SUPPORT WORKERS?

Direct care and support workers provide critical assistance with activities of daily living (ADL) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADL) across various settings.

An individual who, by virtue of employment, generally provides the above defined services, is an "Essential Care and/or Support Worker" also known as a direct care worker. This includes:

- Certified nursing assistants (CNAs)
- Direct support professionals (DSPs),
- Personal support specialists (PSSs),
- Direct support workers (DSW),
- Independent support specialists (ISSs),
- Behavioral health professionals (BHPs),
- Home health aides, and more.
- Other labels: Employment Specialist, CIPSS, CHW, CRMA, CNA-M, MHRT 1, MHRT C, CIPSS, Recovery Coach. This is not an exhaustive list.

There are a large number of job titles, certifications, and training requirements associated with the above categories of worker. Some require certification and some do not. None of these classifications requires a degree from higher education, but all provide the foundation of Maine's professional care infrastructure. However, their work remains undervalued despite its importance to our economy and our communities.

ABOUT MAINE'S ESSENTIAL CARE & SUPPORT WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP

This broad coalition of employers, workers, and concerned individuals is dedicated to reshaping how Maine values and supports its care workforce.

What the Partnership works on

- Increasing investments in Maine's care economy, including both workforce and infrastructure
- Developing innovative solutions to expand and support the workforce
- Elevating care as a valued profession

