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Testimony of Sen. Chloe Maxmin supporting

LD 1497, An Act to Establish the Maine Youth Impact Commission

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and honorable members of the Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business Committee:

My name is Chloe Maxmin. I represent Senate District 13, which includes all of Lincoln County except for Dresden, plus Washington and Windsor—a total of twenty-seven towns. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 1497, “An Act to Establish the Maine Youth Impact Commission.”

As a young person, I found my way into community organizing and politics because I care deeply about this state and its people. It’s important to me that we preserve what is great about Maine and make it even better for the generations to come. But getting to this place wasn’t easy, and I feel an obligation to create more opportunities for young people across Maine to make their voices heard. That’s why I’m very excited to testify in support of creating the Maine Youth Impact Commission, which would be a key tool in giving more young Mainers a voice.

Our government is meant to reflect all Mainers, but right now the voices of young Mainers are missing from the conversation. Older teenagers who cannot yet vote, Mainers over 18 who may not be eligible to vote, and all young Mainers who are generally underrepresented in this body deserve a seat at the table. Maine’s youth is a diverse demographic, so when the youth voice is missing, so are other key voices. I’m glad this bill makes provisions to ensure that members of this council would be geographically, politically, racially and economically diverse. A diversity of perspective is critical to the success of our entire state.

We all know keeping and attracting young people to Maine has been a challenge – it’s a question many of us hear from our constituents or consider in committee everyday. Finding a solution to this challenge will continue to elude us if we do not listen to young people about what they need. Creating more professional and social opportunities for young Mainers, and young people from elsewhere who may be considering building a life in Maine, is only possible if we give young people the opportunity to tell us what they need.

I am very grateful to Representative Warren for introducing this bill, and to the Committee for considering it. I hope that you will see the value in this Commission, and that you will vote ought to pass on this legislation.

Sincerely,

Chloe Maxmin