



JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



HEATHER JOHNSON
COMMISSIONER

February 13, 2023

Senator Craig Hickman
Representative Laura Supica
Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs,

I am writing regarding LD 265, *An Act to Provide Support Services for Military Members Transitioning to Civilian Life in Maine*. This bill would provide ongoing funding for efforts to help veterans transition to civilian life in Maine. Funding for this purpose was provided through Public Law 2021, Chapter 483, *An Act To Provide Allocations for the Distribution of State Fiscal Recovery Funds*, also referred to as the Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan, using federal money for a pilot project. Those funds came through our department and were awarded to Boots2Roots, a local organization I believe you will hear from today. We will be submitting a report on the outcomes of those funds to the Legislature in December of this year.

Connecting veterans into the Maine workforce is vital work both to provide deserved services to our veterans and to boost our economy. It is excellent to see organizations bridging the gap between veterans and jobs in Maine, providing a key pathway to our workforce at a time when employers across the state are trying to hire. Maine can boast one of the lowest veterans' unemployment rates in the nation—something that is aided by proactive efforts to place veterans directly into jobs when they transition out of the military.

On a practical note, if the committee wishes to move this legislation forward, you may consider amending the language to have the funding continue to flow through our department. The existing funding for this purpose flows through DECD, and we would be able to handle future funding with minimal disruption.

Sincerely,

Phoenix McLaughlin
Tax Incentive Policy Manager