

Heather Falker

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To whom it may concern,

Thank you for your time and attention. My name is Heather Falker. I have worked for DHHS for approximately 6 years. I am writing on my own personal time in support of the biennial budget LD 258.

My greatest concerns related to the budget include closing the pay gap, fixing the classification system and continuing Covid aid. This would not only impact myself personally, but also my husband. He has worked for the Department of Corrections for nearly 20 years.

The budget increase would aid in our ability to live. In one year we have seen increases in child care THREE times. On top of the continued price increase for energy and food. This has dramatically affected our household budget. However, I have only received one wage step increase. Which was also my last step.

Previously, we had additional time off to care for our family of five during covid infections. As of 2023 we do not. Unfortunately, covid impacts my child care center availability, due to staff shortages. Consequently, forcing myself and or husband to take time off of work, even if by some chance none of my family is ill. I was pregnant at the time covid became our reality. Therefore, my children are too young to wear a mask safely or effectively.

Please consider my story, that is like so many other Mainer families that also serve The State of Maine for the people of Maine.

Thank you for your contributions,

Heather Falker