

To Whom it May Concern:

I'm an advocate at a Sexual Assault Center in Northern Maine who has been in the field for over ten years. I am writing to show my support towards funding bill LD 566 because, in my time in the field, I have seen multiple staff leave work due to their wages.

As advocates, we are providing a service that is very specific. Pay is important to the new staff we bring on board and with high turnover due to low wages, our service and the community we support have been impacted. Some of the impacts include cancelling presentations to attend court proceedings, not being able to go into schools due to being short staff, and pausing new avenues of support just so we can maintain our regular requirements. I feel, as an advocate, that when we are understaffed, our clients, schools, and community all suffer.

I highly support this bill and want to help our advocates get better wages and hopefully encourage more potential staff to both work and remain in this field. This work is challenging and it is much needed for our communities and our staff should be paid to represent that hard work.

Thank you for your time.