

Sen. Nangle, Rep. Stover, and members of the State and Local Government Committee, my name is Scott Cuddy and I live in Winterport. I'm here today to ask you to vote Ought To Pass on LD 1155, An Act to Address Legislative Salaries.

I served in the 129th and 130th legislature, and would have run again to try to be serving with you today if I could have afforded it. However, I have two boys, 12 and 15, and with the costs of owning a home, raising two kids, the prospect of needing to begin caring more and more for an aging parent, and all of life's normal day-to-day expenses I simply couldn't make it on the legislative salary.

I became a construction worker in 2003, and joined the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers in 2005. During my time in the legislature I was a union electrician and made good money while I wasn't in the legislature. However, I didn't make enough to overcome what I lost during the session.

You all understand our schedule. The legislature begins to meet in December, not long after the election. We then continue (in the long session) until mid June and possibly later. I found that I had to leave my job completely in Mid-December, and couldn't take another call for work until nearly the end of June. That's 7 months for which I was paid under \$14,000. My hourly rate at that time averaged about \$32.00. In the seven months of the long session that I couldn't work as a construction worker I missed out on \$37,000 of income. The \$13,500 that I was paid by the state clearly doesn't replace that. I lost less during the short session, but it was still painful.

I'm not wealthy. I don't have a savings account or trust fund I could draw on to make up the difference. If it weren't for the free childcare I got from family I would have gone broke serving in the legislature. As it is I lived in a cycle of banking everything I could while I was working so that I could have something to help me get through the sessions.

I loved serving the people of the State of Maine in the legislature. I loved the camaraderie, the committee meetings, the full days of session in the House Chamber. I miss it now. I wish I were on the other side of the horseshoe today but I simply can't afford to do it. And I am extremely grateful to all of you who are there now and are able to make the sacrifices needed to serve.

My big concern, though, is that in the 130th legislature I think I was the only construction worker in the House. I didn't go through every legislator's bio, so I might have missed one or two, but I was the only one I knew of. I believe that's an important voice. I believe the women and men who build our roads, hospitals, schools, power lines, homes, and more need their voice heard in Augusta. But right now it's too hard.

I have no problem with making a sacrifice to serve. Even at the rates of pay described in the bill I'd still be taking a loss compared to what I could make on my tools, but the choices I'd make on a daily basis wouldn't be as hard when it comes to my budget.

In closing, please help make it possible for regular working Mainers to be able to serve in those chairs. Help an ironworker, a plumber, an electrician, or a carpenter bring their voice into the process without sacrificing financial stability. Thank you for your time, the work that you do, and for listening. Please support LD 1155.