

Chloe Daikh
New Ventures Maine
LD 1544

Senator Nicole Grohoski, Representative Joe Perry, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services: my name is Chloe Daikh. I live in Portland where I was born and raised, and am currently completing a year of national service at New Ventures Maine in Augusta. I am here today to testify in favor of LD 1544. I spent the first months of my service helping Maine residents file State taxes to receive the \$850 relief check. Many of the people with whom I worked had not filed taxes in years, if ever, and were understandably daunted and even afraid. I was able to communicate to my filers that the Maine State government is invested in their well-being through Property Tax Fairness Credit and the Sales Tax Fairness Credit returns.

Maine's current Child Tax Credit fails filers who need it the most. As a non-refundable credit, qualifying CTC recipients receive up to \$300 off the taxes they owe, but those who owe less than \$300 cannot receive a refund. The modest \$50 increase included in LD 1544 can mean the difference between a child having access to groceries for the week and not; staying in a home or not. Support for this legislation is especially important now that many of the pandemic-era federal tax provisions have expired. Filers who felt enfranchised by their 2021 returns, many for the first time in their lives, were disheartened by their returns this year and once again felt ignored by the American tax system.

This spring I had the privilege of teaching financial literacy workshops to Franklin County high school students. Part of those classes included discussing what life-events might be on students' horizon in the next 5-10 years, and of course the expenses that accompany these milestones. One student offered "kids" as one such expense, then immediately remarked at how expensive raising even one child is. I ask you, do you want the next generations of Mainers to build lives and start families here in our beloved state? If the answer is at all close to "yes," then I ask you to consider passing and funding LD 1544. Not only will it aid the children of today, but also demonstrates to Maine's young people that you hear our concerns about the financial viability of raising a family and will help us help our future children thrive. The passage and funding of LD 1544 demonstrates to Mainers that our state legislature is invested in ending child poverty in our state and will remain a leader in the fight against child poverty on the national stage. Thank you for your time and consideration.