

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee. Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Amy Hill, I work as a Human Services Caseworker at DHHS I am also Board Member/Delegate with MSEA Local 1989. I am here to request that you work to defend and expand resources for state employees wages and support LD 210.

I am submitting testimony on the budget regarding the importance of funding public services and addressing continued retention issues. I have been a state employee working for DHHS for over 25 years. The importance of funding public services and retention continues to be a concern. There have been several vacancies in the OADS office in Lewiston due to turnover in the office. These are Adult Protective and Public Guardian Positions. When this happens the remaining workers take the workload of these positions until more are hired. We have lost workers due to the pay gap as they go for higher paid jobs.

During my years of state service, I have seen high to impossible caseloads, lack of resources, lack of support from management, and lack of training to support the job. To continue to provide quality services, it is important to provide funding to retain and attract well qualified workers. It is important to stay competitive to the private sector. I have seen people leave because they have found jobs that have better benefits and salary as well as less stress due to more manageable job duties.

The pay gap continues to encourage people to look for jobs elsewhere. It continues to be important to attract well qualified people for these positions. These jobs are challenging and can cause burn-out and encourage people to leave. It is hard to keep up with inflation when the salary does not keep up with the cost of living. I travel a lot for my job and so I use my car. The mileage does not keep up with the cost of maintaining a car. With fixing the pay gap, it would help maintain qualified staff and help current workers not have to get second jobs to cover expenses.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Amy Hill