



Testimony in Support of LD 277:

“An Act to Repeal the Law Prohibiting Places of Business from Being Open to the Public on Sunday”

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and the distinguished members of the Committee on Housing and Economic Development, my name is Harris Van Pate, and I serve as policy analyst for Maine Policy Institute. Maine Policy is a free market think tank, a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that advocates for individual liberty and economic freedom in Maine.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 277, a necessary reform that will enhance consumer choice, modernize Maine’s regulatory environment, and foster a more competitive business climate.

Eliminating Outdated Government Restrictions

Maine’s restriction on Sunday business operations is an outdated remnant of "blue laws" that were initially enacted to enforce religious observance. While well-intended at the time, these laws no longer reflect the diverse, far more secular society that Maine has become.¹ The government should not dictate which days businesses can or cannot operate; that decision should be left to individual business owners based on market demand and consumer preference.

Many nearby states, including New Hampshire, allow businesses to operate on Sundays without issue.² By maintaining this prohibition, Maine puts its businesses at a disadvantage, driving economic activity across state lines and limiting opportunities for local businesses to thrive.

Expanding Consumer Choice and Convenience

Restricting business operations on Sundays inconveniences Maine residents, particularly those who work long hours during the week and rely on weekends to shop and conduct personal business. By allowing businesses to open on Sundays, LD 277 will provide Mainers with greater flexibility in how they spend their time and money, reducing the need to travel to neighboring states where such restrictions do not exist.

1

<https://www.gettips.com/blog/sunday-blue-laws#:~:text=Blue%20laws%20in%20the%20U.S.,work%20and%20limit%20alcohol%20consumption.>

2

https://ballotpedia.org/New_Hampshire_Senate_revisits_unenforced_laws_-_keeps_adultery_repeals_%22blue_laws%22#:~:text=May%206%2C%202010,to%20keep%20adultery%20a%20crime.



Supporting Small Businesses and the Economy

Forcing businesses to remain closed on Sundays imposes an unnecessary government restriction that inhibits economic growth and job creation. Allowing businesses to operate seven days a week would:

- Increase revenue for local businesses, many of which operate on thin margins and cannot afford to lose a full day of potential sales.
- Provide workers with more opportunities for employment and overtime hours.
- Generate additional tax revenue for the state without raising taxes or imposing new fees.

In an era where small businesses face increasing competition from online retailers and out-of-state competitors, Maine must foster a regulatory environment that empowers local entrepreneurs rather than restricting them.

Aligning with Free-Market Principles

At Maine Policy Institute, we believe in limiting government interference in commerce unless there is a clear and compelling reason to do so. The restriction on Sunday business operations serves no substantial public interest and arbitrarily limits economic activity. Businesses should have the freedom to set their hours based on demand, and consumers should have the freedom to decide when and where to shop.

Conclusion

For these reasons, we urge the Committee to support LD 277 and take a crucial step toward removing unnecessary government restrictions on Maine businesses. By repealing this outdated law, the Legislature will promote economic growth, enhance consumer choice, and support a thriving, competitive marketplace in Maine. Thank you for your time and consideration.