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LD 468

Testimony for the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs  
and the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry in  
Support of LD 210, Governor's Proposed Biennial Budget

My name is Amy Turgeon, I was born and raised in Maine and currently live in Lewiston. About 10 years ago I found myself in an unfortunate situation that left me a single mom to three beautiful children. The food assistance program truly became a lifeline. The ability to provide food and cook for my family is something I'm so grateful for. I use Farm Fresh Rewards at Blackies Farm Fresh Produce and it's such a huge blessing. It definitely helps inspire and get healthy meals on our table. In fact, my son loves cooking now so much he hopes to be a chef one day! In addition to receiving this wonderful benefit personally, I am also employed at Blackies, and have the joy of helping our customers of all different backgrounds get healthy and nutritious food. I wish you could see their faces when we cash them out! They often shake their head in amazement and say wowwww with a big smile. We get thanked daily for providing this opportunity. Sometimes they share recipes and what they're going to make with all the healthy food. Sometimes they load their box of produce in their car and come back in to get a few more things. Sometimes they are grabbing some fruit on the way to work or getting snacks because their kids are on school vacation. I can assure you, from what I've seen, this program is doing exactly what its intended to do, and that is to get healthy food to all Mainers. I feel like we aren't just providing nourishment for the body but also hope. Hope for a good future and a healthy community. When you have hope, you can move forward in a positive way. Thank you for your time!