

Testimony of Coralie Giles, RN
President, Maine State Nurses Association
Vice-President, National Nurses United

IN OPPOSITION TO LD 797

“An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding Work Search Efforts for Unemployment Benefits and to Eliminate Benefits for Temporary Unemployment”

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor
Hearing: March 19, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

Dear Chair Tipping, Chair Roeder, and distinguished members of the Committee on Labor,

On behalf of more than 4,000 registered nurses and health care professionals providing patient care in our state, the **Maine State Nurses Association/National Nurses Organizing Committee/National Nurses United (MSNA) urges the Committee to oppose LD 797, “An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding Work Search Efforts for Unemployment Benefits and to Eliminate Benefits for Temporary Unemployment.”**

Unemployment funds should go to pay unemployment benefits, not to process pointless paperwork. There is already a requirement that people receiving unemployment benefits seek work. LD 797’s requirement to list three activities will not make anyone more effective at looking for work. It may cause people to lose their benefits because of the greater chance of denials for procedural reasons, however.¹ The onerous demand that the Department of Labor audit 10% of work search efforts may also cause delays.

LD 797 would also make it harder for people to receive benefits while temporarily unemployed. Furloughed employees who expect to be able to return to their jobs should not be forced to engage in unnecessary job search activities or forgo needed unemployment benefits. Widespread economic uncertainty caused by the federal

¹ See George Wentworth, “Closing Doors on the Unemployed,” National Employment Law Project, Dec 19, 2017, at p.11 <https://www.nelp.org/publication/closing-doors-on-the-unemployed/>.

government pulling grant funding temporarily or permanently,² firing and sometimes rehiring federal employees,³ and destabilizing the market means a higher number of workers may be furloughed from jobs this year. They need support.

Maine DOL should not be saddled with extra procedural burden while it is busy helping workers who have lost their jobs.⁴

We urge the Committee to oppose LD 797.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Coralie Giles RN in cursive script.

Coralie (Cokie) Giles, RN
President, Maine State Nurses Association
Vice-President, National Nurses United

² See, e.g., Molly Enking, "EPA freezes \$15 million in Maine energy efficiency funds," Maine Public, March 15, 2025, <https://www.mainepublic.org/climate/2025-03-14/epa-freezes-15-million-in-maine-energy-efficiency-funds>. Kay Neufeld & Riley Board, "USDA halts millions in funding for University of Maine System," Portland Press Herald, March 12, 2025, <https://www.pressherald.com/2025/03/11/usda-halts-millions-in-funding-for-university-of-maine-system-programs/>.

³ Billy Kobin, "Nobody knows how many of Maine's federal workers were fired by Donald Trump," Bangor Daily News, Feb 20, 2025.

<https://www.bangordailynews.com/2025/02/20/politics/washington/nobody-knows-how-many-maine-federal-workers-fired-by-donald-trump-joam40zk0w/>.

⁴ AnnMarie Hilton, "How Maine DOL is helping laid off federal workers navigate unemployment," Maine Morning Star, March 12, 2025, <https://mainemorningstar.com/2025/03/12/how-maine-dol-is-helping-laid-off-federal-workers-navigate-unemployment/>.