

Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, and honorable members of the Taxation Committee: My name is Carrie Jadud, and I live in Lewiston. I offer this testimony in support of LD 1089 and LD 1047.

In the past decade, the shared income for our family of four has more than doubled, from just shy of \$60,000 in 2014 to around \$200,000 in 2024. I offer these numbers to public view with some trepidation. But I want you to understand that I speak from experience when I say income above a certain level can and should be taxed more.

Everything about our life is easier when, after paying our mortgage, feeding and clothing our children, insuring our vehicles, donating to the local food bank, and all the other demands of modern life, we still have money left over for emergencies. Ten years ago, I wondered how we would manage if something happened to our car. Now, we can save. We've been able to pay off our student loans. We can make a deliberate effort to support the local businesses that continue to take a chance on Maine.

I say all this to demonstrate that between \$61,600 (where Maine's top tax bracket currently begins for a single person) and \$200,000 there is a vast difference in what is left over after we pay for necessities. And *still* we would have to quintuple and/or seriously diversify our income in order to qualify for either of the tax measures currently under consideration. I honestly don't even know what we would do with that much money. Buy a boat? Buy two boats? If someone is making a million dollars a year in Maine, they can afford to chip in a bit more to fund our public schools.

Lewiston Public Schools, which my children attend, needed three tries last year to pass their budget. Joining a local get-out-the-vote effort, what I heard most from people was that their property taxes kept rising when their retirement income didn't. They wanted to support local kids, but they didn't know how to do that *and* keep their roofs from leaking.

This is the false choice we've been offering Mainers for more than a decade because we've taken taxing wealth off the table: well-funded schools *or* dignity in old age. MaineCare *or* child care. Affordable permanent housing *or* emergency housing. We're pitting grandparents against grandchildren, and we all lose.

It's time to do better. The state cannot continue to ask lower-to-middle income families to be cheerful givers without asking the wealthy to also pay their fair share. If our first response to a budget shortfall is "how do we hurt kids?" instead of "maybe that guy in the big house doesn't need yet another boat," we are doing our budget wrong.

I urge you to vote "ought to pass" on both LD 1089 and LD 1047.