Testimony of Beth White
Maine Service Employees Association, SEIU Local 1989

In Support of LD 1267, Resolve, Directing the Department of Labor to Convene a Task Force to Examine and Study Issues Relating to the Gap Between Economic Output and Wages of Workers in the State
Sponsored by Representative Dylan Pugh

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor
1pm Tuesday, April 8, 2025, Cross Office Building Room 202 and Electronically

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and members of the Committee on Labor, I'm Beth White, director of politics and legislation for the Maine Service Employees Association, Local 1989 of the Service Employees International Union. We are a labor union representing over 13,000 Maine workers, including public sector workers in all three branches of state government.

We're here today in support of LD 1267, which would direct the Department of Labor to convene a task force to examine and study the gap between the economic output of workers in the State and the wages those workers receive in return and report on the task force's findings to this committee.

As many of you are aware, according to a 2024 compensation study done by the Bureau of Human Resources, state employees are underpaid by about 14% on average when compared to their public and private sector counterparts. This pay gap has caused significant recruitment and retention challenges across state government, leading to understaffing and burnout for remaining employees. Yet, there is no doubt that the services our members provide to our great state, its residents and its guests produce huge economic value for our state.

We believe it would be helpful for Maine to better understand the economic output of workers across the state, including within state government, and the wages workers are receiving. We also appreciate the sponsor including a representative from MSEA-SEIU Local 1989 on the proposed task force and would be interested in participating should this resolve pass.

Thank you and I would be happy to answer any questions.