

Matthew Ward
Livermore Falls
LD 1566

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salsbury, and Esteemed Members of the Committee,

My name is Matthew Ward and I live in Livermore Falls Maine. I am a Maine State Parent Ambassador and the husband to a wife is on many boards and not paid to be there. This means we often incur the expense of childcare and time away from work to provide insight to public policy, inform policies within our local non profit agencies and local ordinances. I watch my wife offer her valuable perspective as a parent, woman and advocate at a cost to not only our wallet but her personal mental health. Oftentimes she expresses that her opinion is so coveted yet she isnt compensated for being there after paying our sitter to take all 3 of our children. She sits on the board of our local headstart that when they wanted to cut even more spaces to special needs programing she pointed out the waitlist for these children in other programs and how we would be tossing them out to the wolves. If we did not have children on the Autism spectrum she may not have had that perspective to offer. She also sits on the board at Be Fierce Self Defense, a non profit whose only goal is to teach women how to best protect themselves. This includes not only physical self defense but mental self defense. Sometimes that self defense is standing in rooms like the committee room to speak in support or against something that deeply affects their sense of safety. Compensating people for lived experience on advisory councils, State boards and Commissions shows that these perspectives have values and must be shared.

This bill sets a clear standard: if you are asking for our time, our insight, and our vulnerability, you must also offer fair compensation. This is not only about equity—it's about sustainability. Many of us are navigating difficult circumstances. Compensation makes it possible for us to keep showing up, and it sends a powerful message that our knowledge is just as valuable as any professional credential.

I urge you to support LD 1566. Valuing lived experience includes valuing our time, our expertise, and our labor. This bill helps create more equitable, inclusive, and effective systems—and it starts by paying people for what they know.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Matthew Ward
District 17