

In support of LD 1265, LD 1539, & LD 1744

Paul Caruso

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Testimony

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, members of the State and Local Government Committee, my name is Paul Caruso. I am here, on my own time, to speak about chronic staffing issues and the state employee pay gap for Maine's executive branch workers in support of LD 1265, LD 1539, and LD 1744.

As a Computer Programmer for the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, I see and experience the impacts of understaffing & the state employee pay gap. I believe that these bills can address these issues and help ensure that the state can properly provide high-quality healthcare under its MaineCare program.

Prior to my current position with the state, I was a grateful recipient of MaineCare's services. I am proud to now work for the state, but wish for the program to be in a better position. I would love to see a MaineCare program adequately staffed and compensated so that Mainers can rely on this healthcare when needed. And these bills offer a pathway towards making it so.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistic's Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics for Portland & South Portland as of May 2024, a Computer Programmer makes an annual median wage of \$119,240. Living in Portland with the same job title, I am compensated at about 45% of that and do not find this to be fair nor attractive to talent. Good talent could be recruited and retained for the MaineCare program by passing these bills, and this is in the benefit of the program and Mainers.

I support LD 1265, LD 1539, and LD 1744. I believe these bills will address chronic staffing issues and the state employee pay gap. I think investing in these bills is an investment in state workers & Mainers alike. And I think it is the right investment.

Thank you,
Paul Caruso