

James McClay  
Limerick  
LD 2074

Representative Mastraccio, and Honorable members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee.

My name is James McClay and I am Licensed Master Social Worker and currently employed as an Investigations Supervisor with the Office of Child and Family Services. I have been employed with OCFS since April of 2017 first as an Investigations caseworker then as an Investigations Supervisor, with a brief stint as a District Training Supervisor before returning to Investigations were my passion lies. I am writing today to express my support for LD2074

In my time with OCFS it appears to me to have been common practice to hire caseworkers with a background in criminal justice/ law enforcement among other backgrounds currently considered not to meet education requirements. I have been a supervisor for the last 4 years during which time I have hired several caseworkers. I have always been excited to learn that potential candidates have a background in law enforcement with a degree in criminal justice. From an Investigation stand point the benefits of this type of experience are many and obvious. These candidates come with not only a sharp attention to detail but also a set of skill that are conducive to crisis intervention, de-escalation and the ability to calmly and respectfully have tough conversations with clients. I have always found that these individuals perfectly compliment the traditional social work background and having the variety of skills where caseworkers can learn from each other only strengthens our districts.

Ultimately keeping the children and families of Maine Safer.

I recently hired a very experienced and skilled individual with great potential. He had several years experience as a police officer and I was excited to welcome him to my team. He completed the OCFS foundations program, a 7 week training. And the feedback from trainers was exceptional. Because of a shift in practice that took place just after this person was hired, he was denied his social work conditional license.

After several months of trying to contact the social work board and filing an appeal, before getting a response this person had to make the tough choice to demote. This to the detriment of the children of Maine. There are many caseworkers, supervisors and even managers responsible for all 8 OCFS districts, within OCFS with a similar background. Many who have proven to be assets to both OCFS and the families we serve. For these reasons and many more, I passionately implore you to vote LD2074 Ought to Pass.

I would be more than happy to discuss this further with any of the honorable committee members should you so wish.