

To: Committee on Health and Human Services

From: Nina Mitchell

Date: Jan 28, 2026 Public Hearing @ 1:00 PM in Cross Building, Room 209

Re: Testimony in support to LD 2144 "Resolve, to Establish the Working Group to Prioritize Wellness and Mental Health Resources for Heritage IndustriesResolve, to Establish the Working Group to Prioritize Wellness and Mental Health Resources for Heritage Industries."

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Nina Mitchell, I am a resident of Orono, and I am a Rural Youth Organizer for JustME for JustUS. I am writing in support of LD 2144, "Resolve, to Establish the Working Group to Prioritize Wellness and Mental Health Resources for Heritage Industries."

The heritage industries, agriculture, fishing, forestry, and logging, are prominent in Maine and are very physically demanding jobs that can lead to chronic pain and mental health challenges. These occupation groups have some of the highest suicide rates in our nation. Additionally, workers are facing increasing challenges as the changing climate impacts their livelihoods, adding financial stress and uncertainty to already difficult conditions.

When mental health resources are not accessible or approachable for industry workers, self-medicating to address pain and mental health challenges can occur in these industries. This bill provides a pathway to provide better support for people in these demanding roles that so many of our rural Mainers work in.

For all the above reasons, I urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 2144.

Sincerely,

Nina Mitchell

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Orono, Maine
LD 2144

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