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Good morning Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Grohoski, Representative Sayer and members of the committee. My name is Mary Ann Larson and I live in Bangor. I am retired, living on a very fixed income and worried about not just my own wellbeing, but see evidence everyday of people whoa aren't thriving. For far too long the deck has been "stacked against" people who work for a living, with preferential treatment given instead to those who live off their investments, which are taxed at a lower rate. Corporations in this state and around the country are doing very well, as are the wealthy; but the rest of us worry about property taxes, paying rent, buying life's necessities, paying for healthcare and heating our homes.

The wealthy aren't going to leave Maine because they're asked to pay taxes commensurate with what they can afford and owe. People's decisions about where they live are based on a myriad of factors. When Massachusetts raised taxes on millionaires they didn't leave the state. Likewise, corporations are in Maine for a variety of reasons, and leaving the state would be a complicated process.

We must be investing in our people. That is the ONLY way we thrive in the future as people and as a state. There are no shortcuts. Invest in our people. Make sure people can access and afford healthcare, that they can work because they have safe and affordable childcare and that they have the training they need for today's and tomorrow's jobs.

Decisions you make are of critical importance to our ability as a state to meet the challenges of the century. Please invest in our people. When our people thrive, our state can thrive. It's that simple.

Deep gratitude for the work you do for all of us and amazing state.