

Rita Pello
Maine DOE
LD 2212

Dear Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee,

I'm Rita Pello and I am writing to you today about the chronic staffing issues and the employee pay gap for Maine's Executive Branch workers in LD 2212.

I am a resident of Augusta and an employee of the Maine Department of Education. And I am primarily responsible for ensuring districts across the state are able to access and effectively implement Title I funding and programming.

At this time, our team at the DOE is losing a position because the federal dollars coming in for these programs are not rising with cost of living or inflation. At risk is the ability for the state to effectively support schools who are doing the difficult work of educating and developing the children in this state. Without funding for this positions and adequate staffing in our department, we will be forced to cut corners and deplete services, making it more untenable to comply with all federal mandates. This puts the state of Maine and its children at risk.

Fairer wages, market rate salaries, and compensation that actually rises with cost of living is the bare minimum the state of Maine can do to ensure that services, even if funded with federal dollars, is provided effectively and to the benefit of Maine residents and families living in our state.

Thank you reading my testimony and for your consideration to pass LD 2212.

-Rita Pello