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The state employee pay gap has a major impact on recruiting as well as maintaining employees. As I have experienced in my 21 years of state government service, once you have reached the top of your pay grade, the raises do not meet inflation. We had years during the LePage administration, where positions were eliminated and employees had to pick up the slack. I have seen many employees leave due to inadequate raises. Our department previously had 7 employees, and we are down to 3 with one contractor. We are reliant on contractors because we are unable to add additional positions due to flat funding at the federal level and low initial pay for positions in state government at Level 1.

I have been waiting for an upgrade to my position for 9 years since I took over the work of employees that had left state government. I was denied by management multiple times and was hopeful with the last contract that the pay gap would be addressed with the pay gap assessment. Nothing had been implemented. I ended up self-applying for an upgrade, and after two years of waiting, my position was upgraded 3 grades. I still had to wait six months for my back pay once this assessment was approved by HR.

I feel that this is a very demeaning way of treating employees that have proven themselves to be long-term servants to the people of Maine.

Please provide the funds to close the pay gap for state employees. We have been working for 8 months without a contract, and it is important to show respect to your workers.