

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and members of the Transportation Committee. My name is Amanda Roy. I am testifying on my own personal time, requesting that you all work to use the state's surplus to restore the \$56 million worth of funding that was taken away from the state employee personal services budget in 2025 – but more specifically for LD2213, I request this committee work restore the \$12.3 million that was taken away from the personal services budget in the last highway budget to support proper investments in the state employee workforce, so we can support ourselves, and reduce the departments vacancy and turnover rates.

Since I began my career at the MDOT-Region 4 Office in April of 2025, I have seen firsthand how the state employee pay gap and working conditions have impacted new and existing employees of the Maine Department of Transportation. In my current position of Office Associate II and working the front desk reception, I have met and had the privilege of conversing with my colleague on a daily basis. During these conversations, topics of low morale, uncompetitive wages, issues with increasingly expensive benefits are mentioned often, sometimes several times in different conversations throughout my day. Something that was unexpected for me was the longevity of employees for most, the longest in our region being over 50 years of service and for some this may be the only job that they hold. The pride that some have when they share stories of their own family's generations previously that had worked to plan, design and build the roads that we all now travel daily. I'm afraid that the trajectory we are on, with leaving state employees undercompensated, will prevent these stories from being carried on into the future. Workers feel especially down when they see consultants, hired by the state, working side by side them making substantially more money on the tax payer's dime. I have also heard the frustration of being short staffed, longer storms and low retention for established employees.

In addition, in my personal life, I'm also the extremely proud wife of a MDOT Snowfighter, who has worked for MDOT for over 4 years. I have experienced the holidays without him at our Christmas dinner table, the delayed birthdays because a snow squall went through, the exhaustion that he experiences when there's multiple storms in a week's time. I have heard the frustration rumblings of the "I don't get paid enough", etc. as he gets home from his 20-30 hour day of keeping Maine roadways open and safe for our neighbors and your constituents. We are a small family who lives well within our means because right now because we have to, it is survival. While we both work two full time jobs, there are times when we have to choose whether we pay to heat our home or put food on the table. It means making those incredibly difficult decisions to pay for medications or pay the copay to be seen by the doctor. Choices, honestly that we as state employees, should have to never face. We are closer to being on governmental benefits than we are to being a financially stable household. We are not alone.

I have seen firsthand how these compensation issues continue to impact all employees on a daily basis. As you can imagine, I take great pride in my position here at MDOT and live personally and professionally by our motto: Integrity, Competence, and Service. Our roles are essential to “Keep Maine Moving”, it would be validated by having a contract and wages that reflect that gratitude and appreciation. You all have the power to put us on the right track. We need your support. Please give us our money back so we can move to close this state employee pay gap, and restore greater pride in the work we do to keep our communities safe.