



**Testimony In Opposition To
LD 827, An Act to Allow Employees to Request Flexible Work Schedules**

March 23, 2023

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and Honorable Members of the Labor and Housing Committee,

My name is Alexander Price and I am before you today on behalf of the Maine Jobs Council. The Maine Jobs Council is a statewide, nonpartisan, member-driven advocacy organization that advances public policies to support the creation and preservation of foundational jobs in Maine. I am here today to testify in opposition to LD 827, An Act to Allow Employees to Request Flexible Work Schedules.

We oppose LD 827 because it would increase the burdens and regulations on employers at a time when most are already struggling. Maine's regulatory and business environments rank among the lowest in the nation. We are 44th in the nation in overall economic ranking and 42nd in the nation in capital investment. Maine is currently experiencing an aging population; lack of quality foundational jobs; top heavy service and public sectors; lack of investment; failure to attract 21st century, cutting edge businesses; high taxes and energy costs; high health care costs; and aging and/or inadequate infrastructure. This proposal does not solve any of those issues.

The Maine Jobs Council certainly supports making workers a top priority. However, the best way to do that is with a robust economy full of quality foundational jobs that provide choices, career growth, and increasing wages. While we appreciate the sponsor's intent with this bill, we believe that it is unnecessary. Employees can already request flexible work schedules from their employer at any time and the employer can either grant them or not. This is a business decision that is best left between the employee and the employer. Most states do not regulate flexible work schedules. As such, this bill would continue to make Maine an outlier at a time when Maine already ranks among the lowest in the nation in numerous economic, regulatory, and demographic rankings.

Individual pieces of legislation that add further burdens and regulations on Maine employers, such as LD 827, are not the solution to solving our state's economic problems. Our overall business environment is 46th, we have the 3rd highest tax burden, the 9th highest healthcare cost, the 11th highest cost of living, and the 13th highest energy cost. Our overall economic ranking is among the last in New England and if LD 827 passes, it will be one more thing that could make it harder for our state's economy to succeed.

We encourage this committee to start taking a more comprehensive look at how workforce challenges, taxes, regulations, infrastructure, and other issues act as a barrier to job creation in our state. Maine needs to develop and follow a long-term strategic plan to create a tax base that works for all Mainers.

The MJC thanks the committee for its time and consideration of this issue, and we would welcome any opportunity to discuss it with you.

Thank you,

Alexander Price, Pierce Atwood
On behalf of the Maine Jobs Council