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**Testimony on
L.D. 1155, "An Act to Address Legislative Salaries"**

**Presented by
Representative David Woodsome
District 139**

State and Local Government Committee
Tuesday, April 25, 2023

Good afternoon, Senator Nangle, Representative Stover, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government:

I am State Representative David Woodsome, and I proudly represent District 139, Limerick, Parsonsfield, and a portion of Waterboro. It is an honor to appear before you today for the purpose of introducing L.D. 1155, "*An Act to Address Legislative Salaries.*"

This legislation proposes that starting with the 132nd Legislature, the salary of legislators would increase to \$25,000 in the first year of each biennium and to \$20,000 in the second year of each biennium.

With Maine lawmakers last pay increase dating back to 1999, and the previous raise going further back to 1990, it is certainly time for us to consider how the current pay structure influences the ability for average citizens to serve.

The demand placed upon legislators is no longer comparable to part-time employment, but is assuredly equivalent to a full-time job. Long days of hearings and floor work followed by meetings and communicating with constituents in the evening can often result in workdays in excess of 12 hours.

I do not believe any of us come to Augusta with the expectation of getting rich or with the desire to exploit the taxpayer through excessive earnings. Nevertheless, adjusting the current pay scale has its benefits.

Many legislators are facing the same economic and financial challenges/problems as the general public in making ends meet. Increasing our annual salary may entice more citizens to run for office, thus widening the diversity of current representation.

It is in the best interests of constituents that our own mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing not be overstrained and that our focus not be divided due to the demands of rising costs and stagnant compensation. What was a reasonable wage nearly a quarter century ago for legislators, I believe no one would argue is currently a justifiable amount.

Thank you for your consideration.