

April 25, 2023

**Testimony of Genevieve McDonald  
Before the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government  
Testifying in FAVOR of L.D. 1155  
An Act To Address Legislative Salaries**

Senator Nangle, Representative Stover, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government, I am Genevieve McDonald of Stonington. I served as a member of the House in the 129th and 130th Legislature, and I am testifying in favor of **L.D. 1155, An Act to Address Legislative Salaries.**

In Maine we pride ourselves on having a citizen legislature, comprised of everyday people who want to be of service to their communities and to our state. Public service is a noble calling and requires a tremendous amount of dedication, both in terms of time and mental capacity. While Maine has a part-time legislature, the work does not end when you leave the State House, or when session is over. During my time in office, I spent countless hours preparing testimony and building support for legislation, attending community events, responding to constituent concerns, and meeting with residents so I could better understand the issues that were important to them. I also served on the Government Oversight Committee which meets continuously throughout the year.

I am grateful to have had this opportunity to serve. However, I could not afford to remain in office. Throughout my time as a member of the House, I had an outside job, while carefully balancing my responsibilities as a lawmaker and a working parent. In 2021, my last full year of public service, I spent \$14,250 on childcare and earned \$14,699 serving in the Legislature. This

figure does not speak to the additional expenses of maintaining a household. At 40 years old, these are the years I need to be contributing to the financial security of my family and planning for the future.

Maine will not have a truly citizen legislature until more people can afford to serve. Lawmakers should be paid a salary that will do more to bridge the gap between altruism and financial stability. Lawmakers should be able to focus on their legislative work and the important issues that are deliberated in this building, and not the need to be earning income elsewhere. Increasing legislative salaries would result in better outcomes for members in terms of time and mental capacity, and in turn, better outcomes for their constituents.

I want the Maine Legislature to continue the legacy of having a citizen legislature. I want people from all walks of life to be able to serve in office. I want to be represented by people who understand the issues I am facing as a working-class Mainer. I do not want legislative service to be accessible only to those who can afford it, and I do not want to continue to lose dedicated members because they cannot afford to remain in office. Please support L.D. 1155 and the future of Maine's citizen legislature.

Thank you for your service, and for your time and consideration.