

Senator Stangle, Representative Stover and members of the State and Local Government Committee. My name is Morgan Dunton and I work for the Maine Department of Education. **I am speaking in support of LD 1854.**

When I was hired nearly two decades ago, I applied in the third round of the position search. It was not unusual for DOE to have to advertise and interview multiple times to find the right person. This is because many positions at DOE require a very extensive and deep knowledge of specific areas and topics. Expert level knowledge and skill proved to be a lifeline in 2020. I showed up for teachers across the state and designed the support and resources necessary to keep going through the many unusual challenges thrust at them in that awful time. Furthermore, because I had been in my position for a long time and proved my expertise to many of our stakeholders, I provided calm in the storm, a familiar voice telling teachers that we could do anything that was asked of us and that I would be right there with them.

Relationships are important and keeping Maine workers in our agencies is key to building those relationships and sustaining confidence in our state agencies. Unfortunately, we have experienced a great “smoosh” of work heaped onto truly expert and dedicated workers who cannot sustain the ever-increasing workload, especially without increasing compensation. We show up, we agonize over the sacrifices we must make to get the work done, and we get the work done so we don’t let our friends, neighbors, and communities down.

Supporting the comprehensive review of the classification and compensation system isn’t just necessary; it is an act of respect. Acknowledging the changing nature of work and honoring the humane capacity of each individual will keep our dedicated workforce serving Maine in each of our agencies.

Thank you.

Morgan Dunton

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