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Testimony in support of LD-1854, the classification and compensation bill

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I feel disrespected by the continuation of not being paid a fair wage. I now only work as much as I am paid to do. I don't do extra. I used to be the last one out of the building, often being there to greet the cleaning staff. My director would remind me to leave on his way out. I don't do that anymore. I don't come in early, I don't stay late, I don't work through my lunch. I love my job, otherwise I would have been gone by now. I understand the importance of the work I do and the impact it has on the citizens of the State of Maine. But that does not mean I don't deserve to be fairly compensated for my work.

I have been working in Data for 43 years, and I have worked for the state of Maine for past 13 years. I have been at the top of my step grades for several years. When I started with the state in 2010, I was one of 4 people in my office, doing data tasks for Adult Mental Health. I am the only one left. There is never "enough money" to hire more staff. The work has changed a bit over the years, but the level of difficulty and the workload has increased 5-fold. I started with doing data entry. I am now expected to develop and create complex reports, but still as a Statistician I. I fulfill all of the requirements of a Statistician II but can't get the recognition or the appropriate pay for it. This has caused me great frustration and resentment. I have the skills and I am performing the tasks, but I don't get appropriately compensated for the work I do.

It makes me feel as if the state legislators and state leadership do not value us as the cogs that keep the State of Maine machine running. They do not see us as people with families and passions and struggles and needs, they see us only as numbers that fill the positions that get the work done. They are turning a blind eye to the cares and concerns of the state employees. Out of sight, out of mind.

I am not paid enough to buy a small, simple house. Notice I didn't say "I don't earn enough", because I do WORK enough, I just don't get PAID what I am worth. The price of a house I can afford is \$100,000. How many houses at that price do you think there are these days? I am currently homeless and have been staying with friends for the past 1 ½ years. I deserve to be able to afford a home of my own.

As Governor Mills stated in her State Employee Recognition Day e-mail, "Every day, with both grit and grace, you ensure that State government meets its responsibilities to Maine people, keeping our state running efficiently and effectively no matter the challenges you face."

I deserve better. We all deserve better. Please support LD 1854.