



Janet T. Mills
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
54 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0054

Laura A. Fortman
COMMISSIONER

**Testimony of Dillon Murray,
Legislative Liaison, Maine Department of Labor
Neither For Nor Against
LD 1935, An Act to Promote Workforce Development by Establishing a
Workforce Development Program Thursday, May 18, 2023**

Good afternoon, Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing. I am Dillon Murray, Legislative Liaison for the Maine Department of Labor (Department). I am here today to speak on behalf of the Department neither for nor against LD 1935, "An Act to Promote Workforce Development by Establishing a Workforce Development Program."

The proposed legislation would require the Department to develop and implement a workforce development program with the purpose of providing services for individuals including language acquisition, housing services, job training and education, transportation, health care and case management. The Department would coordinate with other state agencies to develop and implement an intake system, including an application and system for case management. The bill gives rulemaking authority to the department to implement the requirements of the legislation, and Sec. 2 of the bill contains an annual appropriation of \$10,000,000 per year.

The Department greatly appreciates the intent of this bill, which is to support New Mainer populations currently in need of the services required in the legislation. We recognize the importance of this issue, and the need of coordination in delivering the necessary services to support the transition into available good paying jobs with opportunities for advancement as quickly as possible.

The Mills Administration, through the Governor's Office of Policy, Innovation and the Future, has been working closely with the necessary State agencies and stakeholders – such as DHHS to deliver rapid response services, Catholic Charities and MaineHousing to deliver housing and shelter needs, DOE to bolster investments in language acquisition programs, and DOL to connect individuals to jobs and workforce training opportunities

We saw this bill, for the first time, a few days ago. While we support the overall goal of the bill, we need additional time to analyze the implications for undertaking this new program. The Department does want to express that this responsibility is outside our normal workforce

development expertise. We would need to explore expanding our service delivery model to ensure the array of comprehensive services envisioned in the bill could be provided.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. The Department looks forward to working with the Committee and the sponsor and other state agencies in the coming days. I am happy to try to address any questions you may have.

The Maine Department of Labor is committed to serving Maine workers and businesses by helping employers recruit and train a talented workforce, providing workers with skills needed to compete in our economy, assisting individuals when jobs are lost, aiding people with disabilities reach career goals, ensuring safe and fair workplaces for people on the job and providing research and analysis of employment data to support job growth.