

February 8, 2024

Senator Nangle, Representative Stover, members of the Maine Legislature's Committee on State and Local Government,

I'm Dave Boudreau of Holden. I'm writing to you as a private citizen on my own time and as a member of my union, the Maine Service Employees Association. I'm asking you to support of LD 2121, An Act to Address Chronic Understaffing of State Government Positions, sponsored by Representative Drew Gattine.

I work as a Transportation Worker III for the MaineDOT, a job I've held since November of 2019. I'm writing to tell you there's a real problem with recruiting and retaining MaineDOT workers, and it's mostly because of the State's low pay. Study after study have shown that the State pays us far below what other public and private sector workers throughout Maine and New England are paid for the same work. The fact is, the State just can't get the people to come in or stay at these jobs because of the low wages. This problem is getting worse, not better.

Don't take my word for it on the State's low wages. Please read the 2020 State of Maine Market Study Report. It shows that state workers on average are underpaid by 15% and that maintenance mechanics for the State of Maine are actually underpaid by 31 percent. An earlier study that the State commissioned back in 2009 reached similar conclusions.

There's been a lot of talk in the Maine Legislature about the need for more funding for infrastructure like roads and bridges, and it's great to see funding for more infrastructure in the current State Budget. However, how is the State going to get all that work done without a qualified and experienced MaineDOT workforce? MaineDOT keeps losing workers to better-paying employers both in the private sector and at cities and towns statewide. If MaineDOT wants to have the workforce it needs to maintain our network of roads and bridges, and to carry out all the infrastructure projects in the works, then the State must end the State Employee Pay Gap. Please do your part to help make that happen by supporting and funding LD 2121 to provide the funding necessary to end the State Employee Pay Gap. Maine State Government must implement and fund the 2020 State compensation and classification study. Thank you.

Dave Boudreau
Holden