

February 6, 2024
Support LD2121

Senator Nangle, Representative Stover, members of the State and Local Government Committee.

I'm Captain Daniel Michael McNichol with the Maine State Ferry Service (MSFS). I am here on my own time to speak in support of LD2121.

I have been with the Maine State Ferry Service for nearly 23 years. During my tenure I have witnessed dozens of well qualified crew members depart the Maine State Ferry Service because our pay structure – it is far below the industry standard paid to professional merchant mariners. Most of the mariners that work for MSFS need to be in a place in their lives that allows them the freedom and ability to work and remain with the MSFS.

I have had the honor and pleasure to work as the Port Captain in Rockland for many years. In this role, I oversaw making sure the Ferries were staffed up and running to avoid any schedule interruptions. This was extremely difficult, and I had to ask many of my fellow mariners to work overtime and change their schedules to keep things operating. When I was in this role, this really tested our ability to be flexible and it came at the cost of crew members sacrificing time off. Many crew members have lost and continue to lose their earned vacation time because management has said we can't take that time due to operational need.

Most of the mariners I work with are tired of traveling out of state or the country for employment. So they look to be home in Maine and accept substandard wages. The American merchant mariner is a rare breed, and are becoming scarcer and older by the day. Mariners are much harder to hire and retain. Extra and fair compensation would assist our operations tremendously.

I currently have a daughter in Tufts University Medical School for her MD. Higher wages would also help me assist her with her struggles through Med school. We all know that Maine needs more qualified physicians.

Please support LD2121. Thank you.

Captain Daniel McNichol
Rockland, Maine