

Maine Human Rights Commission

51 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0051



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Kit Thomson Crossman
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Barbara Archer Hirsch
COMMISSION COUNSEL

February 28, 2024

The Honorable Margaret Rotundo, Senate Chair
The Honorable Melanie Sachs, House Chair
Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
5 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

The Honorable Anne Carney, Senate Chair
The Honorable Matt Moonen, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on the Judiciary
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025

Dear Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and Members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary,

The Maine Human Rights Commission (“Commission”) is Maine’s quasi-independent, neutral, apolitical State agency charged with enforcing our state anti-discrimination law, the Maine Human Rights Act, 5 M.R.S. §§ 4551, *et seq.* (“MHRA”). The Commission is statutorily charged with the duties of: investigating, conciliating, and at times litigating protected-class discrimination cases under the MHRA; promulgating rules and regulations to effectuate the Act; and making recommendations for further legislation or executive action concerning infringements on human rights in Maine. 5 M.R.S. § 4566(7), (11). With those duties in mind, the Commission is pleased to provide this testimony in favor of LD 2214.

With regard to the Commission, LD 2214 appropriates funds for an approved reclassification for our Lead Investigator position. The individual now in that role has been performing the job duties of that position, including training and supervising all six of our Maine Human Rights Investigators, representing the Commission at post-cause-finding conciliations, and monitoring compliance with settlement agreements, for over a year. Her application to reclassify her position from Investigator to Lead Investigator was approved on November 3, 2023. This appropriation would fund her retroactive pay back to November 2022, when she began performing this role, in addition to funding the position going forward.

Conclusion

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 2214. The Commission takes seriously its duty to protect the people of Maine from discrimination; this position is critical to effectively fulfilling this mandate. We greatly appreciate the Committee’s attention, and would be pleased to discuss these issues with you at your convenience, including at the work session on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Crossman".

Kit Thomson Crossman, Executive Director

Pronouns: they/them/theirs