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Testimony of House Chair Rep. Michele Meyer presenting
**LD 85, An Act to Revitalize the Maine Temporary Assistance for
Needy Families Advisory Council**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Senator Ingwersen and fellow members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Representative Michele Meyer, representing House District 150, which includes Eliot and parts of Kittery and South Berwick. I am glad to be before you to present **LD 85, An Act to Revitalize the Maine Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Advisory Council**.

The Department is seeking to renew and revitalize the Council that is designed to bring together a vibrant array of perspectives to discuss and then advise the Department on issues affecting recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or TANF. This can include education, training, job opportunities, quality employment and business ownership opportunities, the operation of any postsecondary education programs, and other matters. Discussions among groups with varying, but related, lived experiences are critical to improving programs that support our most vulnerable populations. This is why I was glad to submit this legislation on behalf of the Department.

The bill adjusts the membership of the Council to better reflect its statutory charge, and it authorizes compensation for members. As we all know, serving on committees, councils, working groups, and task forces is time consuming and can take time away from our full-time jobs. I believe those who are willing to designate their time to share their experiences to better others deserve to be compensated for that time.

These changes will help to support the functionality and effectiveness of both the TANF and ASPIRE program, and I hope that you'll join me in supporting this initiative. The Department will follow my testimony to further explain this proposal and take any questions you may have.