



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: Maine Relay 711

**Holly T. Sargent**

625 York Street  
York, ME 03909  
(207) 358-4793

[Holly.Sargent@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:Holly.Sargent@legislature.maine.gov)

March 12, 2025

*Testimony of Rep. Holly T. Sargent in support of*  
**LD 260, Resolve, Directing the Permanent Commission on the Status of  
Women to Study the Extent of Workforce Gender Segregation in the State**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor*

Good morning, Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor. My name is Holly Sargent and I represent District 147, 2/3 of the town of York.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify in strong support of this resolve, which seeks to direct the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women in Maine to study the extent of workforce gender segregation in our state. Addressing gender-based occupational disparities is essential for fostering economic equity, expanding workforce participation and ensuring that all Mainers have access to fair and equal opportunities for employment and advancement.

Workforce gender segregation – the concentration of men and women in different industries and job types – has long-standing implications for economic growth, wage equality and career mobility. National and state-level data consistently show that women remain overrepresented in lower-wage fields such as education, caregiving, and administrative roles, while men dominate higher-paying sectors such as construction, engineering, and technology. This occupational divide not only limits the earning potential of women but also hinders Maine’s overall economic strength by underutilizing the full talent pool available.

Conducting a study to assess the extent of this issue in Maine is a critical first step toward crafting informed policies that promote workforce inclusion, economic mobility, and industry diversity. By identifying specific barriers—whether cultural, educational, or systemic—the state can take meaningful action to address gender-based disparities and promote career pathways that are equitable for all Mainers.

This study will also provide essential insights into the economic impact of gender segregation, highlighting potential workforce shortages in key sectors and helping employers develop more inclusive recruitment and retention strategies. In an era where Maine faces labor shortages in several critical industries, ensuring equitable access to employment opportunities is not just a matter of fairness but a necessity for long-term economic sustainability.

I urge the committee to support this resolve and take an important step toward advancing workplace equity in Maine. By committing to a thorough examination of gender segregation in our workforce, we can build a stronger, more inclusive economy that benefits all workers and industries.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I respectfully request your favorable support of this important legislation.