

**Testimony of Jake Lachance**  
**Government Relations Specialist**  
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**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor**  
**In Support to**

**LD 112 “An Act to Promote Opportunities by Establishing a Student Wage”,**  
**LD 618 “An Act to Allow Minors Under 16 Years of Age to Work Until 9 p.m. During the School**  
**Year and Until 10 p.m. During Summer Vacation”,**  
**LD 644 “An Act to Expand Employment Opportunities for Minor Students by Eliminating**  
**Certain Work Limitations**

Sen. Tipping, Rep. Roeder, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor, my name is Jake Lachance, and I am a Government Relations Specialist for the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, which advocates for over 5,000 large and small businesses across the State of Maine. I am honored to provide testimony in support of Legislative Documents 112, 618, and 644, each of which serves to enhance employment opportunities for young individuals in Maine. Collectively, these bills strike a balance between fostering workforce participation, promoting economic growth, and maintaining reasonable safeguards for student workers.

**Support for LD 112: An Act to Promote Opportunities by Establishing a Student Wage**

LD 112 introduces a minimum wage structure specifically for secondary school students, allowing them to earn 50% of the state’s minimum wage for a period of two years or until graduation. This measure acknowledges the unique employment status of students who seek to gain work experience while balancing academic responsibilities. By offering a lower entry-level wage, businesses are more likely to hire and train students, providing invaluable workforce exposure that equips them with lifelong skills. This bill encourages job creation and economic participation among youth while maintaining fairness in wage structures. As a result, we would anticipate that more employers would offer employment for secondary school students, invest the training and career development into these individuals, and ultimately expand career opportunities for secondary school students.

**Support for LD 618: An Act to Allow Minors Under 16 Years of Age to Work Until 9 p.m. During the School Year and Until 10 p.m. During Summer Vacation**

LD 618 extends working hours for minors under 16 years old, permitting them to work until 9 p.m. during the academic year and 10 p.m. in the summer. This proposal reflects the modern realities of the workforce, where flexibility is key. Many industries, particularly retail and hospitality, require evening workers, and this bill allows young employees to contribute effectively while still prioritizing their education. With parental oversight and continued compliance with federal labor regulations, this bill provides an opportunity for youth to develop responsibility and financial independence.

**Support for LD 644: An Act to Expand Employment Opportunities for Minor Students by Eliminating Certain Work Limitations**

LD 644 seeks to remove restrictive work-hour limitations for 16- and 17-year-old workers, allowing them greater flexibility in their employment schedules. By eliminating constraints on weekly hours and specific time restrictions, this bill empowers older students to gain valuable work experience, contribute to the economy, and support their financial needs. Importantly, this measure aligns with workforce demands while ensuring that minors continue to operate within safe and structured employment environments.

**Conclusion**

Together, these three bills work to provide Maine's young workforce with increased job opportunities, practical skills development, and financial independence. By supporting LD 112, LD 618, and LD 644, this Committee can ensure that Maine remains a state where young individuals can thrive, gain essential workplace experience, and contribute meaningfully to our economy.

I respectfully urge this Committee to vote in favor of these bills. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.