

Testimony in Support of LD 598, “An Act to Require Minimum Pay for Reporting to Work.”

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Good Afternoon Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor. My name is James Myall and I’m here to testify in support of LD 598 “An Act to Require Minimum Pay for Reporting to Work” on behalf of the Maine Center for Economic Policy. MECEP supports LD 598 to ensure employers respect workers’ time, and no one is made to come into work without receiving pay.

LD 598 would address the practice of “overscheduling” sometimes used by employers, in which multiple workers are scheduled for the same shift. As a result, a worker can show up for their shift only to be told to go home because their employer already has the help they need. This is convenient for the employer but can be a real hardship for the worker, who has not only lost the time and gas it takes to get to work, but might have rearranged their whole day to get into work. They may have child care costs or may simply have missed other opportunities to better use their time.

Irregular scheduling and last-minute shift cancellations have impacts on workers’ physical and mental health.ⁱ The loss of income results in higher rates of housing and food instability, and there are spillover impacts on children’s wellbeing, with children of irregular shift workers seeing worse performance in school and more behavioral issuesⁱⁱ.

Requiring minimum pay for reporting to work does not remove an employer’s right to send a worker home if they are not needed. It does make them think twice before doing so, and helps put value on the worker’s time. Fairer scheduling practices can also be good for businesses, since they reduce employee turnover.ⁱⁱⁱ

Maine and Vermont are the only states in New England without some kind of reporting pay law. If businesses in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island can operate with this law, so can those in Maine.

While Maine-specific data on the issue of overscheduling is hard to come by, research nationally and in other states suggests it’s a significant issue: