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Testimony of Rep. Matthew Beck in Support of
**LD 1554, An Act to Require Sexual Harassment Prevention
Training for Restaurant Employees**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor

Good morning, Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and my distinguished colleagues of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor. My name is Matthew Beck, and I have the privilege of representing the people of House District 122, part of South Portland.

I am here today to speak in support of **LD 1554, An Act to Require Sexual Harassment Prevention Training for Restaurant Employees**.

I'd like to express my gratitude to Representative Sato for bringing this important bill before our committee today.

For over 15 years beginning in 2007, I served on the Board of the Southern Maine Workers' Center and volunteered with the organization to help support working people in our state who were not represented by a Union. Many of the workers who reached out to the Center worked in the vibrant restaurant industry in Portland and the surrounding communities of Southern Maine.

We frequently heard horror stories of the mistreatment of restaurant workers – particularly servers – by customers, co-workers, and restaurant managers and owners. The abuse frequently involved unwanted touching and sexually suggestive comments.

The workers suffering the mistreatment were reluctant to speak out or complain out of fear of losing tips from customers or being retaliated against with the loss of shifts when the schedule was made or being moved from preferred shifts to less desirable and less profitable work shifts. They felt powerless to respond to the abuse and felt they had no choice but to grin and bear it.

Please join me in supporting LD 1554 as an important step in improving the working conditions for the people who work so hard to serve us when we enjoy a meal away from home. They deserve our respect and the dignity of not being subjected to sexual harassment at work. Thank you.

District 122: South Portland (Part)