

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, members of the State and Local Government Committee, my name is Anna Massefski. I work for the Office of Emergency Medical Services in the Department of Public Safety, just down the road in Augusta. I'm also a union steward, and I serve on the MSEA Board of Directors. I am here on my own time to speak about my experience on a Limited Term position with the Executive Branch, and why you should support LDs 1256, 1539, and 1744.

My job is to create a youth program that lets students experience Emergency Medical Services, so they can make an informed decision about pursuing the career. The goal is to help get more people into this essential field, and help solve the staffing issues facing EMS agencies.

I was hired in November 2022 in a 2-year position with funding from DHHS. In summer 2023, my boss at the time announced in a staff meeting that the legislature had included my position in the state budget, and so, in his words, "Congratulations Anna, you can stay."

But what we didn't know at the time was that there were two positions with similar coding in my office, and when the service center went to add me to the state budget, they accidentally checked the wrong box. And so I was not "continued and made permanent," as you all intended. Last summer, at the turn of the fiscal year, I went to work not knowing if I'd get paid, not knowing if I'd have a job the next week. That happened again in October, and will be happening again in a few weeks. Derek Gorneau, the Assistant Commissioner for Public Safety, has worked so hard to keep me in my position, and I am so grateful for his support, and Commissioner Sauschuck's support.

But none of this should have happened. It was preventable. It was not one person's fault, it was the fault of our system, that under pays state workers, doesn't provide adequate training, burns people out, creates massive turnover, and then can't attract qualified applicants because the pay is so bad.

And so mistakes get made. Bad mistakes. Mistakes like the one that's been jeopardizing my livelihood for the last year, and is probably going to result in the destruction of a great program that supports youth and first responders across the state.

I share my story to urge you to please support these bills, so that Executive Branch workers can have the pay they need and deserve. So that we can attract good people and keep them in their essential positions. So that we can rebuild that reservoir of institutional knowledge and prevent the people of Maine from suffering the consequences of this system any longer. Please pass LDs 1256, 1539, and 1744 and support state workers.

Thank you.