



Janet T. Mills
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
54 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0054

Laura A. Fortman
COMMISSIONER

**Testimony of Kim Moore,
Director of the Bureau of Employment Services, Maine Department of Labor
In opposition to
LD 1839, "An Act to Strengthen the So-called Maine Hire-a-Vet Program"
To the Joint Standing Committee on Labor
Wednesday, May 6, 2025**

Good afternoon Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor. My name is Kim Moore, and I serve as Director for the Bureau of Employment Services for the Maine Department of Labor (Department). I am here today to speak on behalf of the Department in respectful opposition to LD 1839, An Act to Strengthen the So-called Maine Hire-a-Vet Program.

Serving veterans is important to me. My family is a military family; I have three grandparents who served, both of my parents served, and my husband still does. The intent of the Hire-A-Vet campaign speaks deeply to me, particularly as I reflect on my father's experience as a Purple Heart Vietnam veteran. He received support from veteran employment services and staff, like those who deliver our Disabled Veterans Outreach Program.

Funded by the USDOL Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), the MDOL Veterans Employment Team works to get veterans hired in meaningful employment throughout the year. The Maine Hire-A-Vet Campaign is the annual effort to advocate for the value and benefits of hiring veterans to employers. Held each year in the fall, the campaign goal is to support the hiring of at least 100 veterans in 100 Days by 100 Employers. This past year's campaign recorded the hiring of 191 veterans and family members. The Campaign has a robust and dedicated planning committee and is staffed and supported by our JVSG team and other Department staff.

In hopes of providing additional support for this good work, LD 1839 seeks to establish an advisory commission and authorizes fundraising from private and public sources. The advisory commission must administer the fund, including, but not limited to, the approval of expenditures from the fund to support the program.

However, the bill raises some ethical considerations. The Department believes it is inappropriate for a state agency to fundraise and to solicit funds outside of the state budget process. The

Department receives state and federal funding to provide veterans' services, along with broader employment services, and these funds are authorized in the state budget. Further, the Department must avoid even the appearance of favoritism to certain parties based on their contributions to the fundraising campaign established by this bill.

The Department is additionally concerned that commission membership includes two marketing firms that are explicitly able to participate in the fundraising and development of the RFP process. Such a situation could constitute an Organizational Conflict of Interest (OCI), where a commission member can make or influence decisions that could directly or indirectly advantage their affiliated organizations.

While we must oppose the particular funding mechanism outlined in this bill, we remain committed to providing robust employment services to all veterans, including working with a variety of partners in the veteran community on the successful Hire-A-Vet Campaign. We are always happy to work with the sponsor and stakeholders on continuing to connect Maine's veterans with meaningful employment opportunities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have now or at a future work session.

The Maine Department of Labor is committed to serving Maine workers and businesses by helping employers recruit and train a talented workforce, providing workers with skills needed to compete in our economy, assisting individuals when jobs are lost, aiding people with disabilities reach career goals, ensuring safe and fair workplaces for people on the job and providing research and analysis of employment data to support job growth.