

Stu Mahan
Damariscotta

I, Stu Mahan, testify in support of the bill LD1566. I have been a professional working musician in the state of Maine for the last 17 years. Being self-employed in the entertainment industry is a difficult vocation which requires countless unpaid hours of practicing, preparing, writing, creating, traveling, etc. It takes an immense amount of effort to perform something that sounds effortless. Competition is steep and there are rarely opportunities for stability in performances because of the seasonal nature of living in Maine. When COVID-19 became a reality, we were some of the first folks to lose our work. It was the winter. Covid spreads via aerosols and is most contagious in small, unventilated rooms. That describes my work environment. I lost all my work from February to July in 2020, scraped together a few performances over the summer, then back to no work from October until literally last week. The bill to be considered would relieve financial stressors for people like me and venues, who were hurt unmeasurably during this whole debacle. We musicians are a part of the quality of life in Maine, with our main hub being Portland, and like our booming restaurant culture, live entertainment draws both tourists and new residents to our state. Without live entertainment, our quality of life diminishes. That's not the way life should be. Thanks for your time and consideration.