

State and Local Government Committee
c/o Legislative Information Office
Cross Building, Room 214
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: LD632:An Act to Amend the Social Work Education Loan Repayment Program

Dear Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and other members of the
Committee on State and Local Government,

My name is Mariah Lockhart of Winterport Maine. I am currently a senior in
the social work undergraduate program at the University of Maine in Orono. I
went into the workforce and after 15 years of working in the medical tech
sector I decided that I wanted to help my community and believe that I can
make a difference with my social work degree.

I have been forced to work full time while going to school to support my family
and pay the bills. I have had to both apply for financial aid and take out student
loans to pay for my classes.

Over the past three years I have incurred over \$11,000 in student debt and I am
facing the reality of paying this debt back while working in a field that has
notoriously low salaries as much of social work is completed by non-profit
organizations. Because of the reliance on state and federal dollars these
organizations are not able to offer competitive compensation for the work and
will require me to repay my student debt while making a modest salary. This
loan repayment program would allow me to afford my home and expenses and
be able to pay my student loans off, and focus on doing good work for the
community.

I urge you all to vote yes on LD632.

Respectfully submitted,

Mariah Lockhart, Student
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Winterport ME 04496