

Written Testimony: Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business

Re: LD 632: *An Act to Amend the Social Work Education Loan Repayment Program*

Chairpersons Curry and Roberts, and members of the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business,

My name is Emily White and I am a first generation college student at The University of Maine Orono, and I am in support of LD 632. This May 2023 I will graduate as a first generation college student with a BSW in social work. Though I am currently in Orono for school, my hometown is Jay. The reason for my support of LD 632, is that I am financially responsible for myself with no help from my family. Though my family wished that they could, this wasn't financially possible. What that means for me is that through obtaining my secondary education I also obtained \$25,000 in student loan debt. In addition to being a full-time student I am also working as a server, and doing an internship at DHHS. LD 632 would allow me reassurance to know that coming out of college a great portion of my student debt would be taken care of and I would be able to focus on my future career as well as graduate school. Coming from a family with a low socioeconomic status, finances have always been a high stress factor for me. Since the age of 18 when I first came to school I have been solely on my own with no financial support, that means I have paid my rent, car insurance, groceries, utilities, phone bill, internet, gas, and any other unexpected costs. I can't imagine leaving college with \$25,000 in debt and paying all those expenses on my own. Though I want to focus solely on my social work career when I leave college this may not be possible without the assistance of LD 632. I have worked hard to ensure that I was able to graduate with a college degree unlike anyone else in my family. It's important to me that I am able to use this degree to help advance the social, economic, and well being of people and the society we live in.

With that being said I think it's important to recognize the work that social workers do for many individuals, families, communities, and society. Social workers work diligently to ensure the basic needs are met for individuals and society. I urge all of you to help social workers by voting "yes" on LD 632 so that we can continue to help make society a better place for all. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully Submitted,

Emily White
School of Social Work
University of Maine
emily.d.white@maine.edu

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Jay
LD 632

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Respectfully Submitted,
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