



Maine Credit Union League

2 Ledgeview Drive · Westbrook, ME 04092
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1236 · Portland, ME 04104
207-773-5671 · 1-800-442-6715
www.maine cul.org

Neither for nor against

LD 522: Resolve, Directing the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women to Study the Extent of Workforce Gender Segregation in the State

Committee on Labor

March 12, 2025

Good Afternoon, Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and distinguished members of the Committee on Labor,

My name is Robert Caverly and I am the Vice President of Advocacy and Outreach at the Maine Credit Union League. The Maine Credit Union League is the trade association for Maine's 48 credit unions and over 750,000 members statewide. We respectfully submit the following testimony **neither for nor against LD 522**.

Credit unions were established to provide access to credit and other financial services for those who were rejected by more traditional banks. Founded upon cooperative principles, many institutions were leaders in advocating for the financial freedom of women. Several women were leading pioneers of the credit union movement, including Maine's own Jeanette G. Morin of Brunswick.

While the Equal Pay Act was passed in 1963, access to bank accounts and credit cards for women was not federally guaranteed until 1974 with the passage of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act. Today, women control only a third of US household assets.¹

Addressing this wealth disparity starts in our financial institutions, both as providers of services and as employers. While the financial activities industry, whose workforce is 54% women, has the second highest pay gap, credit unions are leading the way in addressing this inequity.²

Segregated workforces and industries often see disparities based more on gender than on work. Research indicates that when women join a particularly male-dominated industry, the overall pay declines.³ This is why increasing the number of women in management positions, which were historically held by men, is crucial. The Governmental Accountability Office estimated that only 42% of managers were women, despite making up 48% of the workforce.⁴

¹ <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/banking/when-could-women-open-a-bank-account/>

² <https://www.gao.gov/blog/women-continue-struggle-equal-pay-and-representation>

³ <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/20/upshot/as-women-take-over-a-male-dominated-field-the-pay-drops.html>

⁴ <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-23-106320>

Credit unions are determined to address this. A CEO of a credit union is over five times more likely to be a woman than a CEO of a bank.⁵ 46% of CEOs for Maine credit unions and organizations serving credit unions are women. As cooperative institutions, we are dedicated to doing our best to address the inequities that exist in society. We acknowledge LD 522 for its efforts to do the same. We appreciate the committee accepting our industry's views on this important topic.

⁵ https://media.americascreditunions.org/ext/resources/CUNA%20News/Daily/2023/10-2023/Women_in_CU_Leadership_WP_Final.pdf