

## Testimony in Support of LD 598, “An Act to Require Minimum Pay for Reporting to Work.”

James Myall, Policy Analyst

April 1, 2025

Good Afternoon Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor. My name is James Myall and I’m here to testify in support of LD 598 “An Act to Require Minimum Pay for Reporting to Work” on behalf of the Maine Center for Economic Policy. MECEP supports LD 598 to ensure employers respect workers’ time, and no one is made to come into work without receiving pay.

LD 598 would address the practice of “overscheduling” sometimes used by employers, in which multiple workers are scheduled for the same shift. As a result, a worker can show up for their shift only to be told to go home because their employer already has the help they need. This is convenient for the employer but can be a real hardship for the worker, who has not only lost the time and gas it takes to get to work, but might have rearranged their whole day to get into work. They may have child care costs or may simply have missed other opportunities to better use their time.

Irregular scheduling and last-minute shift cancellations have impacts on workers’ physical and mental health.<sup>i</sup> The loss of income results in higher rates of housing and food instability, and there are spillover impacts on children’s wellbeing, with children of irregular shift workers seeing worse performance in school and more behavioral issues<sup>ii</sup>.

Requiring minimum pay for reporting to work does not remove an employer’s right to send a worker home if they are not needed. It does make them think twice before doing so, and helps put value on the worker’s time. Fairer scheduling practices can also be good for businesses, since they reduce employee turnover.<sup>iii</sup>

Maine and Vermont are the only states in New England without some kind of reporting pay law. If businesses in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island can operate with this law, so can those in Maine.

While Maine-specific data on the issue of overscheduling is hard to come by, research nationally and in other states suggests it’s a significant issue:

- In Michigan, and Colorado around one-in-eight of workers reported having a shift cancelled in the prior month,<sup>iv</sup> though not necessarily all of these are once the worker arrives at work
- One survey of DC service workers found 8% had been sent home without pay from a shift.<sup>v</sup>
- A national survey of hourly workers found that 32% of respondents sometimes experienced shift cuts, and more than half of those weren't paid when their shifts were cut.<sup>vi</sup>

This bill will not solve every issue with irregular scheduling, but it will be an important first step in empowering workers and ensuring that all Mainers have their time valued appropriately.

I urge you to vote ought to pass on the legislation. Thank you and I'll be happy to take any questions.

## Notes

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<sup>i</sup> Lonnie Golden, "Irregular Work Scheduling and Its Consequences." *SSRN* April 9, 2015 [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2597172](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2597172) and Daniel Schneider, and Kristen Harknett. "Consequences of Routine Work-Schedule Instability for Worker Health and Well-Being." *American sociological review* vol. 84,1 (2019): 82-114. doi:10.1177/0003122418823184

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7730535/>

<sup>ii</sup> "It's About Time: How Work Schedule Instability Matters for Workers, Families, and Racial Inequality" *Shift Project*, Oct 2019. <https://shift.hks.harvard.edu/files/2019/10/Its-About-Time-How-Work-Schedule-Instability-Matters-for-Workers-Families-and-Racial-Inequality.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> "It's About Time: How Work Schedule Instability Matters for Workers, Families, and Racial Inequality" *Shift Project*, Oct 2019. <https://shift.hks.harvard.edu/files/2019/10/Its-About-Time-How-Work-Schedule-Instability-Matters-for-Workers-Families-and-Racial-Inequality.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> "Working in the Service Sector in Michigan" *Shift Project* Feb 2023. [https://shift.hks.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/MI\\_Brief\\_2022\\_Update\\_Layout\\_Final.pdf](https://shift.hks.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/MI_Brief_2022_Update_Layout_Final.pdf) and "Working in the Service Sector in Colorado" *Shift Project* Jan 2023 [https://shift.hks.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CO\\_Brief\\_02\\_2023.pdf](https://shift.hks.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/CO_Brief_02_2023.pdf)

<sup>v</sup> Ari Schwartz, Michael Wasser, Merrit Gillard, and Michael Paarlberg, "Unpredictable, Unsustainable: The Impact of Employers' Scheduling Practices in DC." June 2015. [https://www.dcjwj.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/DCJWJ\\_Scheduling\\_Report\\_2015.pdf](https://www.dcjwj.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/DCJWJ_Scheduling_Report_2015.pdf)

<sup>vi</sup> Ryan Finnegan and Savannah Hunter. "Increase Awareness and Enforcement of 'Reporting Pay' Policies to Mitigate Impacts of Precarious Work." *University of California Davis, Center for Poverty and Inequality*. Feb 2023. <https://poverty.ucdavis.edu/post/increase-awareness-and-enforcement-reporting-pay-policies-mitigate-impacts-precarious-work>