

Representative Rudnicki, and members of the Labor and Housing Committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on the proposed Act to Create an Alternate Minimum Wage Applicable to Student Employees Who Are under 20 Years of Age and to Employees Who Are under 18 Years of Age; LD 1047. My husband and I own Papoose Pond Campground in Waterford and we strongly support this bill. My family has owned Papoose Pond Campground since 1982 and my husband and I are second generation owners/operators. Throughout the many years that we have operated Papoose Pond Campground, we have employed hundreds of individuals under the age of 20. For many of these workers, Papoose Pond was their first foray into employment. We have always valued the work of our young employees and take it as a privilege and a responsibility to help mold these young people into the types of employees that become valuable members of the workforce, long into their adult careers. We do this recognizing that because of our seasonal nature, most of these employees will only work for us for a short time, and will then, move on to bigger and better careers. Over the years, however, with the rise of minimum wage in Maine, it has gotten more difficult to take on the challenges of a brand new worker when for the same wage, I can hire someone with much more experience who requires far less training. It is difficult to explain to a seasoned worker, that because of the high minimum wage, that we cannot afford to pay them much more than someone who is just entering the workforce. Enacting a bill such as this would allow me to hire a larger number of young employees because their lack of experience would now be figured into their starting wage. I believe this bill would be a win-win for young employees. It would eliminate the barrier that many young people face of just not having the experience to support the same wage as a more experienced applicant, therefore losing out on many entry-level or seasonal positions. Seasonal positions are especially attuned to a young worker, because it allows them to work when they are not in school and to gain valuable job experiences for after graduation when they are ready to enter the workforce full-time. I truly believe that passing LD 1047 would be a huge benefit to Maine's young workforce who are trying to gain the required experiences for their future careers, while competing with applicants who already have it.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I am available for further comment or to answer any questions that the committee might have regarding this bill moving forward.

Sincerely,

Kitty and Duncan Winship

Owners- Papoose Pond Campground, Waterford