

Tracey Aberman
Northeast Harbor

Dear Sirs,

I run a small seasonal cafe in Northeast Harbor. I would like nothing more than to say I can keep my staff lower than 10 so that I could be exempt from this micro managing bill you are attempting pass. However due to the absolutely upside down nature of life and business in Maine, I need a staff of 22 completely uncommitted, barely adult, bodies to staff my store for 12 weeks from 9-3pm. It's like herding cats. It's barely possible to open the doors in a normal season but with Covid and now, apparently, the Maine State Legislature trying to make running a small business even harder, I don't know what to say anymore. Please do not pass this bill. Please stay out of my business.

Please stay out of scheduling employees unless you are prepared to fill their spot. People make a commitment to work (at least a few Mainers do, I'm told) and that is an agreement between them and their employers, not the state. Why you are describing sounds like legislating for mega companies. If you have ever run a small business you'd know what you are asking is nearly impossible. Of course an employee should be able to request a change in schedule! Its common sense and is out of bounds for the government to regulate that. Its a juggling act EVERY SINGLE DAY. There is no imposed time frame that will change that. People are people and believe me, I'd like nothing more than to make one schedule and post it on June 1. But, that is not how lifeworks. Someone's kid gets sick, I can't schedule that in 2 weeks in advance and I cannot always fill the spot. People have anxiety attacks driving to work. People decide to change their gender and undergo hormone therapy during the most stressful season of the year and can't "handle" coming to work....this is what I deal with every day; and all I want to do is provide healthy food to our locals and tourists and support the Maine economy while sending everyone home with a fair paycheck (and fair work schedule).

I hope, if you are planning to pass this bill, you are also planning on adding some text protect businesses from employees who don't commit to said schedule two weeks in advance as well. I am banging my head against a wall these days, trying to understand how every issue is one sided. The economy in Maine relies on businesses to run and yet, every day there is another toxic bill in my inbox for me to address and try and fend off.

Right now, I am supposed to be finalizing my new way-too-expensive touch-less kiosk system that I have been working on to protect my customers. But I just found out that the J1 students can't get visas due to embassies being closed. So, now I am trying to hobble together another substandard staff of Mainers so we can open for the measly 12 weeks we can afford to be open and lo, and behold...now the state of Maine has decided to get in on scheduling my invisible employees. So, not doing my work. Writing a letter; again.

Perhaps we should set up a place where disgruntled employees can go to complain, rather than pasting a one size fits all law onto every situation? Or perhaps instead of cherry picking issues we should look at what is a MAJOR issue in Maine: the hostile environment of business vs employees? This isn't "the way life is supposed to be".

Please do not get involved in scheduling matters.

Thank you.

Sincerely,