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April 21, 2021

*Testimony of Rep. Barb Wood introducing*  
**LD 938, An Act To Ensure Maine Workers' Right To Request a  
Schedule Change at Their Places of Employment**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing*

Good morning, Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester and esteemed members of the Labor and Housing Committee. I am Barb Wood, and I represent House District 38, which is part of Portland. I am here today to present **LD 938, An Act To Ensure Maine Workers' Right To Request a Schedule Change at Their Places of Employment**.

This bill creates the right for an employee to request a change of schedule. You may ask, why is this needed? I asked myself that same question when I first spoke with the organization that wanted me to sponsor this bill. I, myself, worked at one of the largest employers in the state of Maine and employees requesting scheduling changes was an everyday part of our business. Sometimes the request was granted, sometimes it wasn't. Where I worked, there were absolutely no repercussions for an employee to make this request. I feel quite fortunate that I worked at one of the best employers in the state of Maine. Many employers are quite good, like the experience I had. Unfortunately, some are not. This legislation would protect employees from retaliation for making these kind of scheduling requests. This would support families and help to provide stability for workers. Vermont has realized this need and passed legislation. More recently, New Hampshire has also come onboard.

If passed, how would this work? Simply put, an employee must make their request in writing and include the reason for their requested schedule change. It would not force an employer to grant the request. If denied, the employer must respond in writing stating the reason for the denial and offer an alternative if one is available.

Two other points that I would like to make you aware of. First, as drafted, this would not apply to employers with 10 or fewer employees. I've been asked how I came about with that number? Truthfully, I talked with some small businesses in my neighborhood. Various numbers have been talked about. Ten is used in the Act Authorizing Earned Employee Leave that was passed in the last session. And I think you will have a request from another speaker to not put any limit on the number of employees. I leave this to the committee's discretion.

Secondly, the amount of the fine, \$5,000 is something that I would also leave to the committee's discretion. The Earned Employee Leave has \$1,000. A non-compete bill from a couple of years ago had a \$5,000 fine.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will answer any questions that I can. There are also folks testifying after me who are better qualified to speak to the merits of this bill.