



Maine Municipal
Association

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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Opposition to

LD 1453, An Act To Protect Small Employers by Prohibiting Municipalities from Adopting Ordinances Regarding Employee Work Benefits Other Than Ordinances Regarding Minimum Wage Rates

April 30, 2021

Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester and members of the Labor and Housing Committee, my name is Kate Dufour and I am providing testimony in opposition to LD 1453 on behalf of MMA's Legislative Policy Committee.

The authority of self-governance is a privilege that the residents of Maine's 484 communities take seriously. No two communities are alike. Residents are motivated by different priorities, principles and values, which are translated into policies, ordinances and charter provisions that are debated openly and rigorously at the annual town meeting and at selectboard and council meetings.

Municipal government proceedings are open, heavily monitored by media and regulated by the requirements of Maine's Freedom of Access laws. They are also conducted at times of the day when a majority of residents are available to participate, and through the use of remote technology, now accessible at great convenience. Municipal government is an open book.

For this reason, municipal officials strongly oppose the wage and benefit preemption proposed in LD 1453. Barring an inherent risk to public health or safety, residents should retain the authority to weigh the benefits and threats and make decisions on a variety of issues that address the community's interests and priorities.

The Legislature's authority to limit local control should be used sparingly. The very individuals entrusted to elect lawmakers, should in turn be entrusted to decide what is best for their communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration of the municipal perspective on LD 1453.