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**Testimony of Michael Roland, Bureau of Labor Standards, Maine Department of Labor
In Opposition to LD 460, An Act To Amend Certain Employment Laws To Help Front-line and
Other Workers**

To the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing
Public Hearing, Monday, March 7, 2022

Senator Daughtry, Representative Sylvester, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing, my name is Michael Roland and I am the Director of the Bureau of Labor Standards at the Maine Department of Labor (Department). On behalf of the Department, I am offering this testimony in opposition to LD 460, *"An Act To Amend Certain Employment Laws To Help Front-line and Other Workers"* as written.

The Department understands and sympathizes with the apparent intent of the bill, but has the following concerns about its structure:

The section named in the bill, 876, is already taken. Were it placed in the previous subchapter (Subchapter 10: EMPLOYMENT DURING EXTREME PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY), it could be labeled 875-A.

The bill, as written, seeks to create a paid sick leave system for one part of one sector – restaurant workers in the hospitality industry. It is important to note the complexities of paid sick leave, and how much time, effort and care must be given when creating a paid sick leave system. The Department has not had enough time to thoroughly explore the implications of this aspect of the bill.

The bill also fails to define "restaurant". As a result, it could potentially apply to almost every convenience store, grocery store, and big box store, ice cream stand, canteens, cafeterias, etc. that makes/sells food (i.e., sandwiches, pizza, sundaes, etc.) directly to consumers for immediate consumption on or off premises. If this is the intent of the legislation, that should probably be clarified.

In any case, the bill would likely increase the need for complaint investigations by the Department. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the Wage and Hour Division has received over 1200 calls and emails regarding COVID-19, of which more than 900 were questions directly related to paid leave. So, it is reasonable to assume that we will receive many similar calls from restaurant workers and employers and would warrant the need for additional staff.

For the above reasons, we urge you not to support LD 460 as written.

I appreciate your time and consideration of my testimony. I would be happy to help answer any questions now, and a representative of the Department will be available for the future work session.