



**Testimony In Opposition To
LD 1376, An Act to Create a Livable Wage by Increasing the Minimum Hourly Wage**

April 11, 2023

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and Honorable Members of the Labor and Housing Committee,

My name is Alexander Price. I am here today on behalf of the Maine Jobs Council to speak in opposition to LD 1376, An Act to Create a Livable Wage by Increasing the Minimum Hourly Wage. The Maine Jobs Council is a statewide, nonpartisan, member-driven advocacy organization that advances public policies to support the creation and preservation of foundational jobs in Maine.

Maine emerged from the pandemic as the most economically vulnerable state in the nation. We received that ranking due to our percentage of small businesses and their limited ability to cope, our aging workforce, and our dependence on tourism and retail. If LD 1376 passes, what appears to be well-intentioned may do considerable harm to the people it aims to help.

Other states with similar minimum wage laws are New York, Massachusetts, and California. These states can do this because they are wealthier states. Everything is more expensive, they have the highest living costs in the nation, and this generates higher wages. Maine's regulatory and business environments already rank among the lowest in the nation. We are 44th in the nation in overall economic ranking and 42nd in the nation in capital investment, both of which are the worst in New England. We should be passing legislation that helps make Maine less of an outlier.

The Maine Jobs Council supports making workers a top priority. The best way to do that is with a robust economy full of quality foundational jobs that provide choices, career growth, and increasing wages. This law would lead to just the reverse. Supporting working people is critical, but the important word is working. If our companies cannot compete, if money isn't invested here, if jobs stagnate or leave, then we will have more and more people who are not working. There is no substitute for a good job and those jobs come from companies that compete successfully to provide goods and services.

Individual pieces of legislation, such as LD 1376, are not the solution to solving Maine's economic problems. We encourage this committee to take a step back, look at the bigger picture of where Maine ranks compared with the rest of New England and the nation, and start taking a more comprehensive look at how taxes, regulations, infrastructure, workforce challenges, and other issues that act as a barrier to job creation in our state. Maine needs to develop and follow a long-term strategic to make us more competitive, not less.

The MJC thanks the committee for its time and consideration of this issue, and we would welcome any opportunity to discuss it with you.

Thank you,

Alexander Price, Pierce Atwood
On behalf of the Maine Jobs Council