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Testimony

Being a section supervisor for the Health and Environmental Testing Lab, my job is leading analysts to serve the people of Maine by providing the highest quality of testing possible.

Currently I strive to improve analysis efficiency, and data integrity, but one obstacle I face daily is employee un-satisfaction caused at the core by compensation. Our most valuable asset is our analysts at the lab. They have the experience and education required to perform the skills in the lab. But, other than kind words, the most obvious way to demonstrate that is what the State of Maine values is paying or experts what they are worth.

When employees feel undervalued, and are in a chronically understaffed departments, they leave for a place that will compensate them for their experience and education. If the department cannot keep experienced employees, valuable resources have to be used to hire, train, and equilibrate the new employees to the work, leaving gaps for other employees to pick up. The issue of underpaying employees is a cyclical issue that affects everyone.

I have employees who went to college for the work we do in our section, love the work they perform for the lab, and are great employees, but, they would be able to provide better for their family financially working in an unskilled position at a retail store. Another employee is not making enough money to ever be approved for a private loan.

I am trying to build a community in our section of scientists who care about the work we do for the community, and who support each other professionally, but that is next to impossible if we cannot pay enough to keep people at the department. Are we doing enough? Can we do better providing for our employees in turn making our departments less susceptible to turnover and low morale?