

I am writing in regards of our contract negotiations. I am an 18 year employee for the state and enjoy my job. When I first started with the Ferry Service, my pay was not of industry standard, however the lower cost of benefits helped out way these issues for me. Over the years the pay has increased but also so has the cost of our benefits and recently the cost of living has gone out of control. As a licensed Marriner, 1600 ton Master, I am in charge of one of the most expensive pieces of equipment that the state owns, and I carry the most precious cargo that any vessel can carry, people. The Captains and crew provide safe passage in all types of weather, fog, wind, snow for example.

Over the past few years we have been battling constantly with crewing shortages. One classification will fill up then another set will not have enough. We have been told by HR that since all the boats have full time Captains, we do not have a Captain issue. We do have Captains that have had a hard time getting reliefs for vacations and are close to losing their vacation time due to shortages of manpower. I find it very unfair that Able Seaman and Engineers received ample increases to their pay and are able to receive a retention bonus just for showing up to work. The Captains were offered a bonus if we worked three 80 hour work rotations, this means being home 1 week a month, not caring about the home life of my fellow Captains.

In the past, I have helped many times to make sure that the boats would keep running. I would fill in at any position that I am licensed for the sake of the islands we represent to maintain service. Not just me, many of the Captains would do the same, but we are not worthy of the same treatment. I am in favor of anybody receiving increases to their pay, I just want to be treated equally considering my personal efforts and the efforts of the other Captains. Dedication to my job and to the Island communities has been of utmost importance to me and I hope you can see that, we are not normal DOT employees, pay and treat us accordingly, do your research and see our worth! Please support our proposals! Aaron Sheridan, Captain, Maine State Ferry Service