

Amanda Hartman, In Support of LD 1566

April 24th, 2025

To: The Committee On State And Local Government

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salsbury, and Esteemed Members of the Committee,

My name is Amanda Hartman. I am a single mother of one beautiful little 5 yr old girl, named Sophia. I am also an aspiring teacher but currently a substitute teacher for Waldo Cap Head Start Program. I wear many hats. I'm also proudly a Maine State Parent Ambassador. I am writing today in support of LD 1566 and I will explain why.

As a mother and a teacher, I am constantly teaching children that our voices matter and that we need to make sure our voices are heard. To speak up for ourselves if we do not like something or to even stand up for someone if we see something wrong. The main lesson being our voices matter. I feel it's important for community members to be compensated for sharing their lived experiences because it acknowledges the value of their expertise, reduces barriers to participation, and promotes more equitable and impactful policy-making. Now I'm sure you're wondering my perspective on how I see the positive impact this can have for our communities and policy makers. Don't fret because I will gladly share my perspective.

I'll start with unique insight and knowledge. Their experiences offer unique and invaluable knowledge. Real life experiences that data and professional opinions alone cannot capture. Without this knowledge you are not making a fully informed decision. Decisions that impact many lives in our beautiful communities. Many individuals with lived experience, particularly those from marginalized communities, may face financial barriers to participation. Taking time off work, arranging childcare, or covering transportation costs can be significant hurdles. Compensation can help offset these expenses, and allows for a wider range of voices to be heard by those who will be affected. For individuals already juggling work, family responsibilities, and potentially managing the very issues they are advising and sharing their lived experience for. Compensation acknowledges this time commitment. Having authentic insight from those directly affected by policies provides policymakers with a deeper understanding of the real-world impact of their decisions. This can lead to more informed, effective, and equitable policies. Meanwhile giving those willing to open up a platform emotionally and

financially showing them they are valued not only as a person but as a community member as well. This will increase meaningful communication and engagement with community members. In essence, compensating participants for their lived experiences isn't just about monetary compensation. It is about recognizing their expertise, removing barriers to participation, promoting equity, and ultimately leading to more just and effective policies. It's an investment in a more inclusive and informed decision-making process.

So, I urge you to vote yes, on LD 1566

Thank You for your time, consideration, and services.

Sincerely,
Amanda Hartman

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Unity
LD 1566

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