

Testimony in Support of LD 1217
An Act to Require at Least 2 Weeks' Advance Notice of the Work Schedule for Hourly Employees at Certain Businesses

Senator Amy Volk, Representative Erin Herbig, my name is Christy Daggett from the Maine Center for Economic Policy and I am here today in support of LD 1217.

This bill is good for workers and it is good for employers. It is also important to Maine's economy.

Over 50,000 Mainers (8% of our workforce) work more than one job. Maine has the sixth highest rate of "involuntary part-time" employment in the nation. And this number has not improved at all since the bottom of the recession. According to the Working Poor Families Project, of the 643,457 Mainers who had jobs in 2014, approximately 32,000 were part-timers unable to find full-time work, not because they want to work part time, but because those are the jobs that are available.

Workers in low-wage and part-time jobs often have the least say in their work schedules. For those working more than one job, last minute changes in schedule in one job can jeopardize their employment at their other job. This is not only bad for workers, but also bad for employers. One employer's insistence on workers adhering to last minute changes in work scheduling can increase costs for other employers by increasing their employee turnover.

Maine needs more workers with the education and skills to meet the demands of 21st-century jobs. For part-time and low-wage workers committed to going back to school or participating in workforce training programs, last minute changes in work schedules can result in missed classes or even force them to drop out. Indeed, work and family obligations are the most common reason that adults do not finish their college degree. At a time when Maine has over 200,000 adult workers with some college credit but not enough to qualify for a degree, we should support policies like LD 1217 that increase the likelihood that these workers can stay on the job and complete their education.

The bill promotes fairness for workers and among employers that rely on part-time workers who hold multiple jobs. It also is a foundational piece to building a strong economy and strong communities, giving workers a measure of job security and making it possible for them to pursue their education and maintain family obligations with minimal disruption. For these reasons, I urge you to support LD 1217.

Thank you for your time and service to the people of Maine.