



Maine Women's Lobby

THE VOICE OF MAINE WOMEN

MEDIA RELEASE

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Senate to Vote on Roll Back of Child Labor Laws

Bill Would Repeal Workplace Protections for Teens

Augusta – Last Friday, members of the Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development Committee responded to overwhelming opposition, state and national media attention, and pressure from teens, parents, and educators, by voting unanimously to kill L.D. 1346, An Act to Enhance Access to the Workplace for Minors. This bill that would have repealed all hourly protections for 16 and 17 year-old workers and would have instituted a training wage of only \$5.25 for any worker under the age of 20.

That's good news for Maine teens and our economy. Unfortunately, the threat to Maine's longstanding child labor laws continues. L.D. 516, another roll back to Maine's child labor laws, could see a vote in the Senate as early as tomorrow.

"L.D. 516 would have teens work longer during the school day, more hours during the school week, and later at night – until 11 pm on a school night," said Laura Harper, Director of Public Policy for the Maine Women's Lobby. She continued, "It's time for Maine lawmakers to reject all roll backs on our child labor laws. We urge Mainers to tell Governor LePage and their legislators that this bill takes Maine in the wrong direction."

Volumes of research demonstrates that once teens work over 20 hours a week, drop-out rates and even substance abuse rates increase. Further studies show that the more hours teens work, the more likely their grades will decline—and the less likely they'll be to pursue math and science course work in school. According to data from the Department of Labor, more teen girls are working than teen boys.

Said Harper, "It's time to tell lawmakers, 'We don't want our teens working one hour more, one hour later, period.'"

Maine Women's Lobby is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, membership organization working since 1978 to increase opportunities for women and girls through advocacy and legislative action.