



Maine Women's Lobby

THE VOICE OF MAINE WOMEN

MEDIA RELEASE

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New Bill Would Gut Child Labor Protections *Second Bill Would Reduce Wages and Eliminate Hour Protections*

Augusta – Shortly after lawmakers in the Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development Committee voted to roll back work hour protections for teen workers, another bill was introduced that would go even farther.

“L.D. 1346 constitutes an unprecedented roll back of Maine’s child labor laws. It would put the future of Maine’s young women and men at risk,” said Sarah Standiford, Executive Director of the Maine Women’s Lobby.

The bill, introduced by Representative David C. Burns (R – Whiting), would abolish minimum wage protections for high school students under 20 – limiting their income to just \$5.25 in the first six months. And it eliminates any cap on the number of hours a 16 year old could work on a school day.

Said Laura Harper, Director of Public Policy for the Maine Women’s Lobby, “It’s difficult not to see these two bills as an effort to find the lowest common denominator. Volumes of research demonstrate that students have the greatest success in high school and better likelihood of entering college when their hours at work are limited during the school year. Far from helping kids support their family, these bills will increase the hours teens can work, lower their wages, and decrease their chances of future success.”

Maine’s child labor laws were first enacted in 1847, and strengthened repeatedly over the years because educators complained that students forced to work long hours outside of school were falling asleep in class. The current law limiting working hours for 16 and 17 year-olds was forged through bipartisan agreement in the legislature about the need to balance employer interests with the health and welfare of Maine children. According to the Legislative Record, in debate on the Senate floor, the original law was referred to as the “Put Learning First, Put Working Second” bill.

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.

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