



April 15, 2021

Dear Senator Chipman, Representative Terry, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation,

I join you today on behalf of the Maine Women's Lobby. For over forty years, the Maine Women's Lobby has advocated for public policy which increases the health, wellness, safety, and economic security of Maine women and girls, with a focus on the most marginalized populations and communities.

We are here **in support of LD 428, " An Act to Prevent Tax Haven Abuse."** We thank Representative Tepler for sponsoring this important bill.

Many of us are familiar with the persistent gender disparities we still face – for instance, women in Maine are more likely to live in poverty¹, and still make between .66 and .88 center for every \$1.00 a white man makes²; are more likely to experience sexual harassment and violence³; more likely to be discriminated against in the workplace; and are less likely to be represented in Government (the US Congress is 30 percent female, by far the most representative class in the body's history⁴).

Yet we don't often think of how our state budgets – how we raise and spend our resources – are constructed in ways that either exacerbate or improve gender equity.

Our budgets are an expression of our values, and we can use them to shape equity across many spheres, including gender. For example, tax exemptions for corporations disproportionately benefit men as the primary leaders and shareholders of those entities, while taxes on lower earners disproportionately affect poorer women, as women still make the larger share of people in poverty. When a budget does not meet the basic needs of its people, women – especially Black, brown, and Indigenous women, women with disabilities, and other women with marginalized identities – are the ones most likely to be left without access to adequate health care, food security, and overall economic security.

Our current tax system allows multinational corporations that operate in Maine to obscure their profits in known tax havens – therefore avoiding contributing their fair share. LD 428 seeks to

¹ United States Census Bureau, 2014—2018 Poverty Rate in the United States By County. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/2014-2018-poverty-rate-by-county.html>

² Lifetime Wage Gap Losses for Women Overall State Rankings: 2018. (2020, March). Retrieved August 3, 2020, from <https://nwlc-ciw49tixgw5lbab.stackpathdns.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Women-Overall-Lifetime-Losses-2020-v3-1.pdf>

³ Dumont, Robyn MPPM and Shaler, George MPH (2015). 2015 Maine Crime Victimization Survey: Informing Public Policy for Safer Communities. Maine Statistical Analysis Center. Retrieved from https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/maine_statistical_analysis_center/5

⁴ Rutgers University (2021). Center for American Women in Politics. Retrieved from <https://cawp.rutgers.edu/women-us-congress-2021>



Maine Women's Lobby

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level the playing field, and to ensure that hardworking Mainers, and the corporations that do business here, are contributing to our economy.

Over the last year, many flaws in our system came to light. It is now more clear than ever how childcare, paid family and medical leave, and access to health care and public health systems are essential parts of our state infrastructure. A fair and just tax code is also part of the state infrastructure and can help us make the investments we need for a sustainable recovery. LD 428 will help to make that a reality, so that everyone in Maine is part of a fair system that works for all of us.

Please vote 'yes' on LD 428.

Sincerely,

Destie Hohman Sprague, Executive Director
Maine Women's Lobby / mainewomen.org