



Maine Credit Union League

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE CREDIT UNION LEAGUE

IN SUPPORT OF

L.D. 477, *An Act to Provide Relief to Federal Employees Affected by the Federal Shutdown*

February 5, 2019

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services. My name is Todd Mason. Thank you for giving me another opportunity to testify before your Committee. I am the President of the Maine Credit Union League, and I am here today on behalf of Maine's 55 credit unions and our nearly 700,000 members to express our support for Senate President Jackson's bill, L.D. 477, *An Act to Provide Relief to Federal Employees Affected by the Federal Government Shutdown*.

I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to Senator Jackson and his staff for working with representatives from the financial services industry on this legislation. We were all interested in helping the nearly 1,100 hardworking Mainers who were impacted by the shutdown. Collaboration on issues like these is important, and I hope we can continue working together to address our state's most critical challenges.

Even though people are back to work, the threat of another federal government shutdown remains on our horizon. While I hope our policymakers in Washington will come to an agreement over a long-term funding deal to keep the government open, we should be prepared in case negotiations fail. Our credit union network stands ready to help – just as it did during the shutdown.

Maine's credit unions didn't shy away from the challenge of assisting those members who were struggling. Credit unions live and breathe by the philosophy of "People Helping People." We are always working to provide our members the best possible service, but our actions can be even more meaningful in trying times like these.

While the types of assistance offered varied from credit union to credit union – all of their collective efforts were based on member need. Whether it was offering a member a low interest – or in some instances, 0 interest loan, a loan deferment, or financial counseling, our network came up with creative solutions to support our members. And, with the financial backing of the state behind us, perhaps even more can be done in the

future at other financial institutions across Maine if another federal government shutdown occurs. With the state assuming most of the risk as Senator Jackson's bill proposes, affected employees would have better opportunities to qualify for short-term, interest free loans.

I don't have to convince you that our state is special. Maine is a great place to live and work because people here care about their neighbors. And when our neighbors need help, Mainers step up to the plate. This legislation is a prime example of that – and while I hope it won't be needed, it is an important safeguard that should be put in place just in case.

Thank you for considering our industry's views and allowing me to testify before your Committee today. Please let me know if I can answer any questions.