

Testimony for L.D. 221

An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2021, June 30, 2022 and June 30, 2023

Dear Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement & Business I write this testimony for L.D. 221 in support of continued funding for programs through the Maine Development Foundation; especially that of those young professional networks through the Realize Maine Network. Realize Maine Networking being a statewide initiative that brings together regional group representation united around the cause of attracting and retaining young people in Maine

As chair of Uplift LA which is an active participant of the Realize Maine Network, a group of young professional groups from within the state brought together by the Maine Development Foundation, we personally have witnessed and benefited from the State of Maine funds allocated towards the cause. I've been actively involved with the Lewiston Auburn Metropolitan Area Chamber of Commerce, formerly known as the Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce, for over a decade and for as long as I can remember its young professional network has been a benefactor of these state grants and funds. Once known as the Young Professionals of the Lewiston Auburn Area and now known as Uplift LA, we are a catalyst for our community through an active group of rising professionals in the Lewiston Auburn Area through collaboration with local nonprofits, businesses and the education sector by providing opportunities for collaborative engagement, networking, professional growth and forums for those who live, work or enjoy the area.

Most recently, Uplift LA has been a benefactor of RMN grant funds that have provided substantial support for Uplift LA's 40 Under 40 Program. The Program was started in 2016 from a team of rising professionals of the Lewiston Auburn Metropolitan Area that recognized many individuals within our communities are doing commendable and noteworthy things towards the betterment of our area and wanted to publicly recognize their work and accomplishments. Over the past year's Uplift LA's 40 Under 40 Nominees, Honorees and Awardees were recognized amongst the community receiving much praise and many accolades. As of September 11, 2020, the program has received over 440 nominations. Each of those nominations highlighting the many great accomplishments and contributions our young + rising professionals are making towards the betterment of the Lewiston Auburn Metropolitan Area. Those 440 nominations have resulted in over 6,800 community votes which in turn have resulted in recognizing 130 unique individuals under the age of 40 as one of the program's honorees.

Uplift LA's 40 Under 40 Program is only one of the many projects and initiatives that funding to the Realize Maine Network has stimulated and made an impact on our communities, economy and both our young professionals and businesses. This funding continues to both retain individuals in our State as well as attract individuals to come to our State. Being that Maine has one of the oldest median ages in the United States, funding initiatives like the Realize Maine Network continue to provide candidates for our aging workforce.

On behalf of the members of Uplift LA and the young and rising professionals of the Lewiston Auburn Metropolitan Committee, I support L.D. 221 and the funding of State of Maine initiatives like the Realize Maine Network. These initiatives are crucial to the survival of our businesses and providing a sustainable future for our State's workforce.

Sincerely,

Matthew D. Shaw
Committee Chair, Uplift LA of the LA Metro Chamber



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