

**Testimony in Opposition to**  
**LD 1842 An Act To Amend the Laws Governing**  
**the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program**

March 25, 2014

Senator Craven, Representative Farnsworth and members of the Health & Human Services Committee, my name is Thea Day and I live in Eddington. Today I am a full time working parent, able to support my family thanks to the Parents as Scholars Program.

Because of work and family responsibilities, I am unable to be in Augusta today to share my story of why it is so important that you **don't eliminate the Parents as Scholars** program.

In 2002, I moved home to Maine as a young, single parent of a son with special needs. I moved to be closer to my Mom – for her reassurance; her help and support, and to forge a new life, one that would support my son and me. Together, my mother and I tried to start a business, but this just didn't work so that there was enough to support us. I was discouraged and wasn't sure where to turn.

That changed when I applied for TANF and found out about the Parents as Scholars program. I started college in 2003, paying my tuition to the University of Maine in Presque Isle with grants, scholarships and working two part-time jobs. The PaS program played a critical role in helping me cross a couple of big barriers to getting through college while also working as much as I could.. This program assistance in paying for child care and emergency vehicle repairs made all the difference in my being able to reach my goals.

In 2008, I graduated with a Social Work degree, thanks to tons of faith, healthy doses of strength, self-determination, perseverance, family support and small doses of state aid when it was needed the most.

We no longer receive public assistance but we are extremely grateful to have been helped along when we needed it. Had I not had this opportunity, I know we wouldn't be where we are today – I have stable employment and my son is doing well in school and other areas of his life.

Today, I am the Social Services Director for The Salvation Army, and have been fortunate to serve in this capacity for the last 4 years. As such, I am able to help people meet their basic needs of food, clothing, utilities, rent and career counseling. I also collaborate with community organizations and agencies to streamline services to help meet other needs and fill gaps in our community.

Because of the opportunities I had in the Parents as Scholars program, I am able to encourage other individuals and families to access the supports available to them that

will give them the hand-up needed toward their own journeys to self-sustaining lives and careers. The same type of hand-up given to me that made it possible for me to be where I am today. I want to thank you for that and hope that you will ensure that this opportunity remains for others to have the same opportunity for success.