



Maine Municipal Association

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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

Neither For Nor Against

LD 256 – *An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families*

March 7, 2013

Senator Craven, Representative Farnsworth and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Kate Dufour and I am providing written testimony “neither for nor against” LD 256 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association (MMA).

We are providing testimony “neither for nor against” LD 256 for two reasons.

First, MMA’s 70-member Legislative Policy Committee has not yet had a chance to take a position on the bill. That will occur this afternoon.

Second, since the bill is in the format of a concept draft, it is difficult to determine the tasks that may be assigned to municipal officials or potential impacts on local government. As the old saying goes, the devil is in the details.

Based on an MMA staff reading of the bill, it would appear that recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) would be required to work with elected and appointed municipal officials to find employment or volunteer opportunities. If this reading is correct, it is likely that municipal officials will oppose the proposal as a mandate that shifts responsibilities for establishing, maintaining, staffing and overseeing a job placement program from state agencies (Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Labor) to the towns.

While municipal officials agree they play an important role in the process of assisting individuals to regain employment, that responsibility should be focused on making sure that applicants of the state/municipal General Assistance (GA) program are provided information about the work placement opportunities and programs offered in the community and region.

If additional input on LD 256 is provided by the Association’s Legislative Policy Committee when it takes up this proposal, I will provide that information to the Committee before its work session.

Thank you for your time and consideration.