


Good day Senate Chair Brakey and House Chair Gattine and also to the other honorable members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Susan Lamb and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. I am here today to testify on LD 452, "An Act To Require a Work Search for Job-Ready Applicants for Benefits under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program".

 The Maine Chapter of NASW is opposed to this measure. TANF benefits are for all families that qualify for them. We do not always know why someone may not be able to produce three applications for advertised jobs that they may or may not be qualified to accept. We also have the very real problem in Maine of illiteracy. It is difficult for an illiterate person to find work of any kind. Then there is the issue of transportation to and from work. Maine is a rural state with very limited public transportation for those who do not own a vehicle. There is also the issue of who else is living in the home and what type of supervision or care do they need on an ongoing basis.

I want you to understand that social workers want their clients to be working whenever possible. It is good for the family to have a working role model and it is good for a person's self esteem to go to work. The problem with this proposed law is that it is a one size fits all solution to a multifaceted problem. It assumes that non working people don't want to be working when in most instances, people want to work in order to improve their family's situation. Thank you and I'd be happy to answer any questions.