

Good Afternoon, Chairwoman Craven and Chairman Farnsworth and honorable members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Susan Lamb, I am the Executive Director of the Maine Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers and I live in Kennebunkport. I am here today to testify in opposition to LD 256, An Act to Amend Laws Governing Recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

The Maine Chapter of NASW is opposing this legislation because although it is well-intentioned, and I consider Rep. Beaudoin a personal friend of mine, the bill does not take into consideration all of the barriers that some people on TANF have that make working at this point in their lives impossible. Let me list just a few of these for the committee: Transportation to get to work, difficulty in finding childcare for a sick or disabled child, the possibility that the TANF recipient is waiting for a disability claim to be adjudicated (months to years) and that this client of TANF is simply too disabled to perform any work. The very real possibility that there is no work available through the town or even in the local schools.

It is laudable to want people to work, and I personally believe that a job in and of itself is a great boon to anyone's mental health. So do my members who work with people receiving TANF. However, we cannot assume that all people on TANF are people who CAN work. It is for that reason that NASW is opposing this bill.

Thank you. I would be happy to answer any questions that any of you might wish to ask me about.