



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Rep. Colleen Madigan Introducing LD 1302, An Act To Increase  
Workforce Participation in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program and  
Other Assistance Programs  
April 24, 2017

Good morning Senator Brakey, Representative Hymanson and fellow members of the Health and Human Services Committee. I am Representative Colleen Madigan, and I represent part of Oakland and part of Waterville. I am here today to introduce LD 1302, An Act To Increase Workforce Participation in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program and Other Assistance Programs.

During the 2010 gubernatorial campaign then candidate Paul LePage talked about creating a tiered welfare system. He talked about reforming the welfare system. To be honest, my ears perked up. I was interested; I wanted to know what his ideas were.

Some of you may find this hard to believe. After all, I am not known for agreeing with the policies of this administration. However, I do believe that many of my colleagues across the aisle and even the governor share with me the same goal of helping Maine residents get beyond the need for public assistance. We do, however, have different ideas on how to make that happen. So when the now-governor mentioned a tiered welfare system, I was listening. It is an interest of mine.

We value work in our culture. We want people to work. And I believe people want to work. I've never known anyone who wanted to remain in poverty and not work. People who work pay taxes and contribute to society in numerous ways.

The path out of poverty is through work. So let's truly value work and help people get to work. If you talk to people in poverty, particularly in rural areas, transportation to work is a major barrier. Outside of our three major metro areas, there is little to no public transportation. Lack of transportation is often the catalyst for losing a job and falling deeper into poverty.

I propose that helping people with transportation costs to work is a productive use of federal TANF funds, it is allowed under federal law. It can also help at-risk families from losing a job and needing assistance.

What if we could help a single mom with the cost of a car repair and thus prevent her from needing to go TANF? What if a non-custodial parent could keep his job and keep paying child support and taxes if we helped them get their car fixed?

These are things that could help keep working families working, and not needing TANF. That is what this bill does – gives people the way to get to a job, or to keep that job and either get off of TANF or not require it.

Thanks you for your consideration. I look forward to working with you on this bill.