



November 16, 2023

Dear Governor Mills:

We are reaching out directly to you as Maine state workers who love our state and are invested in raising our families in Maine. We take pride in providing critical services to the public. We have a sense of duty to our communities, our families and our collective future.

We know you are aware that Maine state workers are fighting rising costs of living and inflation. We are struggling; many of us live paycheck to paycheck.

Throughout all departments of Maine State Government, our worksites are understaffed and we are underpaid and overworked. All the while, the State has record budget surpluses that have come at the expense of substantially underpaying us for the quality services we consistently provide to all Maine people. Studies in 2009 and again in 2020 show that state workers are underpaid compared to the wages earned by our public and private sector counterparts throughout Maine and New England. The 2020 study showed that on average, state workers are underpaid by 15 percent, and it's even worse for many classifications – accountants are underpaid 20 to 33%; chemists, 24%; civil engineers, 20 to 25%; mechanics, 31%; and correctional officers, 16%.

We deserve to be treated with the respect we have earned and the compensation we need to compete with the public and private sectors throughout Maine and New England.

Your bargaining team is so far refusing to address the pay gap despite the fact that both your administration and the Legislature have acknowledged it needs to be remedied.

As you know, the Supplemental State Budget passed by the Maine Legislature and signed into law by you on July 11, 2023, requires the State to “negotiate in good faith” to “close the pay gaps between employees of this State and public and private employees performing comparable work in this State, other New England states and other states”. When will HR acknowledge that as well and offer an honest compensation proposal that closes the pay gap? When will HR propose a fair package that addresses the desperate need to recruit and retain workers?

We respectfully ask that you take closing the pay gap seriously and to show it through your actions. Please direct your bargaining team to offer a wage proposal that closes the pay gap and ensures that we have appropriate staffing levels.

Sincerely,

#closethepaygap