



Support LD 1854

Require the State to complete and implement the classification and compensation study

Ask your State Senator and State Representative: [Support LD 1854](#), An Act to Complete and Implement the Comprehensive Review of the Classification and Compensation System for Executive Branch Employees, sponsored by Representative Drew Gattine.

LD 1854 would require the State to finish and fund the classification and compensation study begun in 2019. LD 1854 establishes a schedule for future compensation studies and classification reviews – and it provides a mechanism to hold the State accountable.

Specifically, **LD 1854 would require the State to:**

- **Perform a compensation study every two years;**
- **Conduct a comprehensive classification review every 10 years;**
- **Complete and implement the results of the current classification and compensation studies by July 1, 2024.** To ensure accountability, LD 1854 would require the State to give a 5% across-the-board pay increase to all state workers if it fails to complete the study and fix the pay gap by that date.
- **Establish a State Employee Compensation Stabilization Fund** to help fund closing the state employee pay gap. The stabilization fund would be part of the State's official cascade for the distribution of unappropriated General Fund surpluses.

The public hearing on LD 1854 will take place at 9:35 a.m. Friday, May 12 in Cross Office Building Room 214 and online before the Maine Legislature's State and Local Government Committee. **Testify in support of LD 1854;** see our **Guide to Testifying in Favor of LD 1854** for details. You also can [use this link bit.ly/2023paygap](#) to tell your state legislators and the State & Local Government Committee: **Please support LD 1854 and in the budget, fund closing the pay gap and updating the state's broken classification system.** Customize your message by telling them how the pay gap impacts you, your family and the services you provide.

Background on LD 1854, the legislation requiring the State to complete and implement the classification and compensation study:

Reports in [2020](#) and [2009](#) show State of Maine workers are underpaid by 15% on average — far more than that for scores of positions including, but certainly not limited to, chemists, maintenance mechanics, civil engineers, office assistants and associates, customer service representatives for our state parks, and the workers at the State-run schools in Maine's unorganized territories.

In testimony both from MSEA-SEIU members and the departments of Maine State Government before legislative committees on the proposed State Budget, it's apparent **the State needs to bring its classification and compensation system into the 21st century!**

The State's current compensation and classification systems were put in place in the late 1970s. Under both statute and the civil service rules, the State, through the Bureau of Human Resources, is required to perform active management and oversight, including regularly reviewing all positions (5 MRSA § 7061(4)), and regularly performing comparative studies of salaries for State workers (Chapter 18, Section 389, chapter 5(2)(B)). **Yet the State's oversight has been haphazard; it has failed to adequately manage the systems in any comprehensive manner since the 1980s. As a result, the overall architecture of the classification system is in shambles, and pay for State workers has lagged far behind those of their peers.**

In 2019, MSEA and the State entered into a Memorandum of Agreement requiring the State to undertake a compensation and bring the results back to the Legislature in early 2021. However, COVID delayed the start date. The consultant ultimately completed [the market pay report](#) in November 2020, and, as expected, the results were jarring. The data showed State workers are underpaid 15% on average compared to their peers. When the consultant's contract wrapped in early 2021, the classification report was still incomplete. On August 17, 2021, MSEA and the State entered into an agreement requiring a good-faith effort to complete the study by March 31, 2022, or otherwise provide a status update to State and Local Government Committee. As the study was still not complete, Maine DAFS Commissioner Kristen Figueroa testified before the committee signaled her desire to finish the study.

Over the past several years, MSEA has repeatedly asked whether the State intended to bring back the consultant to finish the study, but until recently, the State was noncommittal. Finally, a few months ago, the State responded that they were not interested in bringing back the consultant, and signaled their belief that they could finish the review themselves.

To date, the State still has not finished the review of classifications. This is not acceptable.

Ask your state legislators and the State and Local Government Committee: Support LD 1854 to fund the completion of this study and allocate the funds necessary and sufficient to substantially close the state employee pay gap.