



Belfast Area Chamber of Commerce

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March 19, 2019

Labor & Housing Committee
Maine State Legislature
Augusta, ME
LBHS@legislature.maine.gov

To the Committee;

The Belfast Area Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of its member businesses, wishes to submit this comment to the state legislature on a pair of bills pending which could affect our membership. LD 808 and 612 both establish a Youth Wage lower than the state's Minimum Wage.

A lower Youth Wage can spur increased hiring of teens, providing them preparation for future work. This is a widely acknowledged short-coming of the current workforce and leads to a lack of basic preparedness among entry level adult workers.

A lower Youth Wage can also lessen wage pressures on employers who are seeking ways to manage labor costs in light of increased wage requirements for adult workers from both legislation and market pressures. A Youth Wage can allow employers to more actively consider hiring youth where appropriate and offering the opportunities and experience that will serve that demographic throughout their lives. This clearly benefits our communities as a whole through the development of more engaged, active and contributing citizens of all ages.

We do not have a recommendation between these two approaches to a Youth Wage, but strongly urge the Committee to adopt and recommend some mechanism for this intent to be enacted for the benefit of our youth, our businesses, local families and our communities as a whole.

Thank you all for your work on our behalf.

Sincerely,

Stephen Ryan
Executive Director

c: Rep. Scott Cuddy, Scott.Cuddy@Legislature.Maine.gov