



**LOCAL LODGE S-89**  
P.O. Box 481, Bath, Maine 04530

DISTRICT LODGE 4  
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MACHINISTS & AEROSPACE WORKERS

Carol L. Sanborn, President  
E-mail: [csanborn61900@roadrunner.com](mailto:csanborn61900@roadrunner.com)  
Cell: (207) 313-0043

## **5/9/23 Public Hearing**

### **Testimony of Carol L. Sanborn, President IAMAW Local Lodge S-89 In support of LD 1756 "An Act to Protect Employee Freedom of Speech."**

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and members of the Committee:

I am a resident of Dresden and am President of Local S-89 of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAMAW) which represents members in eight bargaining units across four counties.

I have direct personal experience with "captive audience" meetings. I and my co-workers were subjected to them when we organized a union in my workplace. Additionally, I helped workers in another workplace organize their union and was witness to their experience with these meetings. Neither of these employers hired outside anti-union firms to intimidate their employees; they chose to do it themselves. I saw good workers with a strong work ethic frightened to their core by misleading information and the threat of workplace catastrophe. This is not good for workers and it is not good for business. Businesses who want to join the Chamber of Commerce (a union of businesses) are not threatened with catastrophe if they join, and neither should workers be subject to tactics of intimidation and coercion for wanting to join together.

In these situations, workers were called away from their work to attend mandatory meetings where they were required to listen to their direct supervisors and owners of the company employ guilt and nurture anxieties to influence them against forming a union. Management pleaded with workers to remember that they "are all family" and that the company "has only their best interest in mind" as they warned them of the evils of talking with each other to discuss safety and economic issues. The workers were warned that their personal information would become public knowledge and that the employer would no longer have any ability to protect their information. Workers were trapped in meetings where false and out-of-context information was twisted to generate an emotional response at a time where the workers had no ability to think cognitively, check facts, or converse freely. These meetings are used to relay disinformation in a group setting where anyone with questions would be singled out and held up as an example to the others of what would happen to them if they were so bold as to question their employer. No opportunity was given for legitimate conversation.

A Maine employer may not intimidate, harass, or otherwise threaten an employee—with a single exception: when an employee expresses interest in learning more about unionization and/or attempts to participate in joining a union, employers have free rein to coerce, scare, and create panic in people to influence them to vote a particular way. Employers are permitted to do this through very personal, mandatory meetings where employees are paid to attend and are required to participate in their own intimidation.

The historical relationship between workers and their employers is that in exchange for their labor, workers receive payment. Workers must conform to certain workplace behaviors dictated by the employer, but ownership of their minds is not a part of the transaction. As a part of this transactional relationship, an employer should have NO right to control or attempt to influence an individual's thoughts. It is unfortunate that we need a law to prevent this from happening, but from my personal experience, I can attest that we do.

Opponents will argue that employers have the right to provide business-related information to their employees. This bill does not change that. This bill does not prevent them from posting their views conspicuously in the workplace, and it does not prevent them from disseminating written materials. This bill simply prevents them from requiring employees to participate in being confined without consent and forced to listen to views in which they may not be interested. If, on the other hand, an employee is interested and welcomes the employer's views, that is a situation to which they have consented and, accordingly, they are not being held against their will. Workers should be free to perform the work for which they are being paid as an alternative to forced confinement.

I urge you to support our Constitutional right to not listen by voting ought-to-pass on LD 1756.