

Testimony for LD 187: “An Act to Prohibit Labor Organizations from Imposing Mandatory Service Fees on Nonmembers”

Barney McClelland – IBEW local 2327 Retired

Good morning, Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and members of the Labor Committee, my name is Barney McClelland. I was a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers local 2327 and am now retired. I was also the Secretary of the Southern Maine Labor Council for eight years.

I was first introduced to union membership early in my working life when I joined the United Steel Workers at the Stran Steel Plant in my home state of Indiana. Like most nineteen-year-olds, I don't remember taking my union membership that seriously. All I knew was that I was making more money than most of my friends and had something called “health insurance”. But as I moved through my working life, I came to understand the importance of that membership. Steel mills, like most industrial workplaces can be dangerous places to work. Fortunately, through the collective bargaining of my union “grandfathers” and “fathers” much of that was mitigated through workplace rules and grievances that insured we not only made a good living with benefits, but that we would be able to come home safely to enjoy them. Even though over fifty years have passed, I remember Roy Dyer, my shop steward, who didn't care for the smart-alecky kid with the long hair but would defend me against any supervisor who tried to take advantage of my inexperience. I also remember the first time I saw the deduction from my paycheck for union dues.

I have worked a number of jobs over the years, both union and nonunion, and I can tell you that I've always been happier in a union workplace. I have never complained about paying dues – complained about a lot of other things – but never about paying dues.

I am now retired and live in a nice house, with a comfortable income from my pensions, 401Ks, am able to travel with my wife and enjoy some of the finer things in life and when my friends and acquaintances sometimes remark “you sure are lucky”, I quickly correct them and say “luck has nothing to do with it, but a good union contract certainly does.” Those contracts are supported by dues. Dues which I was more than happy to pay

LD187 is a solution looking for a problem. I don't see any outcry from employees. But I do see well-heeled lobbyists from out of state pushing these bills for the benefit of a few. I urge you to reject this any other so-call “right to work” bills.

Thank you for your time.

Barney McClelland  
YARMOUTH  
LD 187

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