

Testimony of Coralie Giles, RN
President, Maine State Nurses Association
Vice-President, National Nurses United

**IN SUPPORT OF LD 1587, “An Act to Establish Greater Alignment of Penalties for
Certain Labor Law Violations”**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor, Hearing: April 16, 2025 at 10:00 a.m.

Dear Chair Tipping, Chair Roeder, and distinguished members of the Committee on Labor,

On behalf of more than 4,000 registered nurses and health care professionals providing patient care in our state, the **Maine State Nurses Association/National Nurses Organizing Committee/National Nurses United (MSNA)** urges the Committee to support LD 1587.

Strong enforcement of Maine employment law is essential to ensure that Maine workers get the wages and breaks they are owed are not subject to exploitative employment conditions. Employment law violations are common, while enforcement of the law is limited. The Maine Center for Economic Policy estimated that workers lost \$30 million in 2017 to minimum wage violations alone. Meanwhile, the average penalty employers cited by the Bureau of Labor Standards for violating wage and hour laws between 2021 and 2023 was a mere \$9.61 per violation.¹

When violations are only subject to minor fines, bad actor employers have a strong incentive to steal workers’ wages. Businesses can come out ahead on average and the people responsible know they will never face personal consequences for even intentional lawbreaking. Meanwhile, workers struggle to get by without the wages they earned. LD 1587 would balance the scales by codifying the provisions of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 into statute and creating a criminal penalty for anyone who intentionally or knowingly violates Maine labor laws.

We strongly urge the Committee to support LD 1587.

Sincerely,

Coralie Giles RN

Coralie (Cokie) Giles, RN
President, Maine State Nurses Association
Vice-President, National Nurses United

¹ Arthur Phillips, Maine Center for Economic Policy, *Worker justice wins and losses in the 2024 legislative session*, (May 15, 2024).