



**Testimony In Opposition to LD 827
An Act to Allow Employees to Request Flexible Work Schedules
March 23, 2023**

Good morning, Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing. My name is Simon Thorne and I live in Farmington, Maine. I am the Senior Manager of Government Relations for Consolidated Communications. On behalf of Consolidated, I'm here today to offer the following comments in opposition of LD 827:

Consolidated is a public utility that employs 625 people within the State of Maine. Consolidated collectively bargains with two unions in the State of Maine. It has been challenging for several years to find and hire qualified employees for a range of positions within the organization. The intent of the bill, in some cases, might help employees and employers provide balance between work and family life. The problem, however, is that there are good reasons this cannot adequately be accomplished because of the business Consolidated is in.

As a provider of last resort in Maine as well as premier internet service provider, Consolidated has obligations regarding service availability for its tens of thousands of customers. In addition to its residential customers, Consolidated is a provider of communications services to systems such as the State's E911 service, Police and fire departments across the State, cellular phone towers, hospitals and banks. Due to its service obligations, it is important to have employees available on regularly scheduled tours to ensure good coverage when issues do arise. Coverage is necessary to ensure that outages are as short as possible in their duration and that our customers can get back to their activities as quickly as possible.

While this bill is well intentioned, Consolidated believes that it should be left to the employers and the employees to agree on the work schedule verses creating laws that mandate flexibility that can be detrimental to the state's telecommunications infrastructure and put customers at risk in the event of an emergency.

For these reasons, Consolidated urges the committee to vote Ought Not to Pass on this bill. I'm happy to answer questions you may have, or bring supplemental information to the work session at your request. Thank you for your consideration.