

Testimony from Phillip Joseph, in Support of L.D. 1895, “An Act Regarding the Procurement of Energy from Offshore Wind Resources”

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology, my name is Phillip Joseph. I'm a 3rd Year electrical apprentice with IBEW L.U. 567 and I'm here today to speak in favor of L.D. 1895.

Power infrastructure is what makes our way of life possible; its importance cannot be overstated. The ever-present question of how best to provide our power hasn't faded over time, only increased in complexity and urgency. As we Mainers seek to answer this question, let's strive toward a solution that sets safety, our high ethical standard, and local Mainers at its core. To that end, I offer my story.

Before joining the IBEW, I worked for a non-union contractor. At the company, management did everything they could to obstruct pay transparency. As a result, I was paid less than other employees with the same job title and description I had, despite my having more experience and responsibility. They were able to commit this and many other abuses because my employer diligently cultivated an atmosphere of silence. If they wanted to pay you unfairly, they could. If they wanted you to complete a task in an unreasonable or unsafe manner, you did. And all this in silence because if not,

the repercussions were severe. There were no third parties or representatives present to ensure that we were being treated lawfully and most of us had no feasible recourse in the event of retaliation.

While working in that environment I performed tasks which nearly cost me my life on more than one occasion. And for what? The product we produced was subpar, we didn't have a formal apprenticeship program so there was very little knowledge of and respect for the electrical code, and people got hurt. All this so my employers could cut labor costs. The company wanted to save on labor, so the workers paid the price.

Since joining the union, I've been able to look with pride at cleaner, safer jobsites where stewards and safety staff ensure that workers are treated fairly, and job hazards are dealt with according to rigorous procedure. Our wages are appropriate and administered transparently. When Brothers see something wrong, they make their voices heard. Because of this and a well-structured apprenticeship, workers are more knowledgeable, content, and focused. Tasks are completed rapidly and correctly with quality workmanship the first time. And, union constitution bound to prioritize local hires, Mainers have the greatest access to these opportunities.

As we continue to face the big question of how to supply Maine's growing power needs, bills like this one that firmly defend the rights of Mainers to

safety in the workplace, fair pay, and gainful employment opportunities are indispensable. LD 1895 ensures these rights to every worker, union or non-union, operating under a labor agreement on installations within its purview.

Thank you for your time.