



**Testimony of Larry Grondin
in Opposition to LD 372**

"An Act to Increase Enforcement and Accountability for Wage and Hour Violations"

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing. My name is Larry Grondin. I am the Vice President of R.J. Grondin & Sons and the chair of ABC Maine's Government Affairs Committee. ABC is a national association with 69 chapters representing more than 21,000 merit shop construction and construction-related firms. On behalf of ABC Maine's 182 members who employ over 2,500 people we are testifying today in opposition to LD 372.

According to the amendment to the concept draft offered today, this bill seeks to increase the penalties for wage and hour violations and allow the Department of Labor to serve as a penalty collection supervisor of any proven claims against an employer. The bill also appears to sweep those contractors fulfilling contracts with the State into the additional penalties section of 26 MRSA, §53.

Our members are proud of maintaining workplaces that pay great salaries and benefits, provide safe work environments, and uphold the standards of the law. We do not believe that Maine's construction industry should be subject to penalties outside the normal bounds of the existing statute. We believe the fines laid out in Chapter 15 are ample and provide enough latitude for the Department to scrutinize and determine when a violation has occurred and the penalty that should be paid.

We also question why the department needs to be involved in the supervision and collection of payments due to employees assessed by the Department after a violation has been determined. We believe the power granted to the Attorney General in the existing statute provides enough of a deterrent to encourage a bad actor to pay what they owe.

Overall we believe LD 372 is unnecessary and especially punitive of the construction industry. We hope this committee will vote "ought not to pass."

Thank you and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have or provide answers I do not for work session.