



LOCAL LODGE S-89
P.O. Box 481, Bath, Maine 04530

DISTRICT LODGE 4
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MACHINISTS & AEROSPACE WORKERS

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2-12-25 Public Hearing

Testimony of Carol L. Sanborn, President IAMAW Local Lodge S-89

In opposition to LD 187 "An Act To Prohibit Labor Organizations From Imposing Mandatory Service Fees On Non-Members"

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and members of the Committee:

I am a resident of Dresden and a paralegal working in Topsham at a law firm with a State-wide practice in representing injured workers. I've been there 41 years. I am President of Machinists' Union Local S-89 which has seven bargaining units in four counties.

I have the unique experience of having worked for the same employer both without and with union representation. I know the difference. I am happy to pay dues, which are a little over \$0.40 per hour. That 40 cents amounts to the cost of a sandwich and a drink, yet in exchange I receive regular pay increases, pension increases, less expensive but better quality health coverage, and a workplace structure that ensures employees will be treated fairly. It's a no-brainer.

Paying dues is analogous to paying property taxes. Property owners pay for services such as those provided by our police, fire, and public works departments, and by our schools. If my neighbor chose not to pay their taxes yet was entitled to the same services, I would not be ok with that. They didn't pay, yet drive on plowed roads, send children to public schools, obtain services at the town office, and receive protection from the police and firefighters—all at the expense of those who believed in paying their fair share. If property taxes were optional, our municipalities would not be able to continue providing these services for long. Similarly, the services provided by unions require financial contribution by the users of the services.

Like union dues, property taxes are not compulsory. We can choose not to own property. We have the *right* to rent housing if we do not want to assume the responsibility that comes with ownership. Similarly, **we already have the *right* to work in a non-union environment.** When we choose to own property, we are choosing to support municipal services. When we choose to work under the terms of a union contract, we are choosing to receive the benefits and representation derived from that contract.

Unions are required to represent everyone in the bargaining unit whether or not they are a "member." A worker **already** has the right to opt out of membership. A person who does not want to be a member may choose to pay an "agency fee" which is an amount less than "dues," but which recognizes the costs inherent in the collective bargaining from which we all benefit. Or, they may choose to work in a non-union workplace with lower pay, no protection, and fewer benefits. You don't see these people clamoring to give back their weekends, paid vacation and

health benefits, 8-hour days, unemployment insurance, or retirement, but they want to make sure they get it without cost or inconvenience to them.

My workplace organized through the Machinists' Union. By the time we concluded negotiation of our first contract the company realized they had given up nothing and gained much: they retained full management rights, gained better health insurance for staff at a reduced cost to the firm, and reduced administrative time spent on issues that were now pre-resolved by the collective bargaining agreement. When companies and workers understand the rules, and when those rules apply equally to everyone, communication is improved to the point where problems are solved through conversation. Businesses save money and produce a better product when their employees are union.

This so-called "right to work" legislation does not give us any rights. It's a scam promoted by those who feel entitled to benefits for which others have worked. Those who promote these bills stand at the podium and speak words written for them about ideas crafted by affluent people whose influence reaches far. They are asking you to support legislation allowing the greedy to have more. Ironically, these are usually the very same people to condemn the disadvantaged as "only looking for a handout." *We already have the right to work.* They are asking you for a handout to which they are not entitled--to give them the legal right to take advantage of the rest of us so that they will have less opposition when they go after more.

In closing, I'd like to remind you of the lesson we learned as children in the story of "The Little Red Hen": if you don't help tend the garden and make the bread, you shouldn't get to eat it. This concept is the underpinning of all that Maine workers value.

For all of these reasons, I urge you to oppose LD 187. I invite you to use me as a resource any time if you think I can be of help. Feel free to give me a call or send an e-mail any time. Thank you.