



2.12.25

Testimony of Jason J. Shedlock

"An Act to Prohibit Labor Organizations from Imposing Mandatory Service Fees on Nonmembers"

Chairs Tipping, Roeder and members of the Committee on Labor, my name is Jason Shedlock, I live in Portland with my 13 year old daughter, and I stand before you to testify against LD 187. I stand before you having the privilege and honor to represent the nearly 400 members of Local 327 of the Laborers' International Union based right here in Augusta, an organization where I serve as the Secretary-Treasurer and Organizer. As President of the Maine Building Trades, I bring forth the sentiment of our 20 affiliated unions and their over 7,000 members. I also serve as the President of the Southern Maine Labor Council, where I amplify the voices of over 30 unions representing nearly 10,000 members across York, Cumberland and Sagadahoc counties. I am here to bring the unanimous view of those organizations and members as I testify in opposition to the latest tired attempt by a Virginia -based, big business-funded national organization to push a predictable agenda that strives to ensure profits stay big while workers are made small.

Across the US, union worksites are 19 percent less likely to have an OSHA violation and have 34 percent fewer violations per inspection.¹ Notably, OSHA inspections at union worksites are more likely to occur due to referrals while inspections at non-union worksites are more likely to occur due to employee complaints.² What does that mean in practicality? It means, shockingly, that when individuals are members of organizations that were founded on workplace safety, the jobsites where those individuals work are more safe.

I also serve as the Chair of the Maine Apprenticeship Council. And although I do not stand before you in that official capacity, I will speak on the issue briefly as it's critically important to Maine's future. I am a proud advocate for Registered Apprenticeship in all industries, union and non-union. We know that unions and their contracting partners are responsible for the vast majority of Registered Apprentices in the construction industry nationally. That trend is the same here in Maine. What does that mean in practicality? It means that the next generation of Maine's builders will carry forth the same professional and safety-first approach as our current unionized workforce. And that's a good thing.

¹ The Impact of Unions on Construction Worksite Health and Safety: Evidence from OSHA Inspections
<https://illinoisupdate.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ilepi-pmcr-unions-and-construction-health-and-safety-final.pdf>

² *Ibid*

The legislation before you today would dramatically impact Maine's construction industry. This law would serve to significantly dilute workers' voice on the job and their ability to collectively bargain their working conditions and compensation. Developers and contractors exist to make a profit. And there is nothing inherently wrong with that. But when they do so by balancing their budget on the backs of the very workforce they count on to make a profit, there is something inherently wrong with that. Union members in the construction industry trust that their sisters and brothers are safe and skilled. Efforts to weaken that may serve the bottom line, but it does not serve those Mainers both you on the Committee and I in my roles, are elected to represent.

The effort to pit Mainers against each other may be in the best interest of a Virginia-based organization and their deep-pocketed, big-business funders, but while it pains me to have to do so, I will remind you that at election time, they do not vote for you. And when there is an accident on the job in your districts, that organization won't be calling you. Those on the Committee who decide that it is in fact in the best interest of their constituents to support the re-warmed leftover bowl of soup that is this legislation, your phones will indeed ring. And it won't be a Virginia number, those calls will begin with a 207 area code. It'll be your constituents, my members, on the other line sharing what this legislation will mean to them. You might want clear your voicemails.