

Testimony of Amy Strum in opposition to LD 187  
“An Act to Prohibit Labor Organizations From Imposing Mandatory Service Fees”

Good morning Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and members of the Labor Committee. My name is Amy Strum and I am a proud member of the Maine State Nurses Association (MSNA) . In 2021 and again in 2022 by a 74% margin, nurses at MMC voted in favor of unionizing with MSNA. In September 2022 we ratified our first contract improving our wages, benefits, working conditions, and increasing the safety of patients. I am here today to testify in opposition of LD 187.

LD 187 is a ‘Right to Work’ bill. Do not be fooled by this seemingly righteous name. What ‘Right to Work’ bills are really designed to do is to bust unions for the benefit of putting more profit into the pockets of employers and corporations at the expense of their workers.

The Right to Work movement is steeped in racism and was pushed for in the 1940s by Vance Muse, an antisemitic, white supremacist and KKK leader, as a way to maintain Jim Crow in the south. He was terrified that union organizers would get white and black workers to join the same unions. His goal was to destroy these labor unions and the right to collective bargaining. Today in states with ‘Right to Work’ laws workers suffer from lower wages, inferior benefits, increased safety risks, and fewer rights.

When the nurses at MMC ratified their first contract we negotiated a union security clause. Nurses in the bargaining unit must pay either dues to the union or make a charitable contribution equal to union dues. All bargaining unit nurses however, enjoy the benefits, support and protections of the union. The overwhelming majority of nurses elect to pay union dues and it is those dues that support our union and give us the strength to negotiate in good faith for our patients, ourselves, and the profession of nursing. LD 187 would threaten this strength and weaken our union.

I leave you with a quote from Martin Luther King Jr., “In our glorious fight for civil rights, we must guard against being fooled by false slogans such as ‘Right to Work’. It is a law to rob us of our civil rights and job rights.”

Members of the Labor Committee, do not be fooled by LD 187. Its sole purpose is to rob us of our right to organize. I urge you to oppose this bill.