

February 12, 2025

Good Morning Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and members of the Labor Committee. My name is Janel Crowley. I am a registered nurse and member of the Maine State Nurses Association. I work in the NICU at Maine Medical Center, and I serve as the Chief Steward of the bargaining unit. I come before you to testify in opposition to LD 187.

Despite its seemingly positive name, there is nothing good about right to work legislation. It originated in the Jim Crow South and has deep roots in a history of segregation, racism, division, and efforts to maintain racial and economic hierarchies. Those facts alone should be enough for anyone to understand this type of legislation has no place in Maine in 2025.

Right to work laws are designed to weaken and undermine labor unions because some business and political entities perceive them as a threat to their power. Their fear isn't unfounded. Union members are more likely to be regular voters, be involved in their communities, and participate in political activities. However, when workers are not required to pay union dues, collective bargaining units struggle to maintain the funding necessary to effectively represent and advocate for members. In every single state with right to work legislation there is a consistent pattern of lower wages for all workers, reduced benefits, and diminished protections for working class people. Right to work laws do not promote freedom or choice; instead, they strip workers of their ability to collectively negotiate for better conditions and fair treatment. I'll say the quiet part out loud: LD 187 is an attempt to legalize workers free loading off their colleagues. LD 187 is a union busting tactic.

Now more than ever before, it is crucial that we reject policies rooted in a legacy of discrimination and division. I urge you to stand with workers and consider the harm LD187 would have on all of us. Please continue to protect our rights and our dignity and oppose LD 187.