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### **Testimony in Opposition to LD 187, HP 0120**

Good morning, Senator, Tipping, Representative Roeder, and Members of the Labor Committee,

My name is Linda Deane. I have lived my entire life in the Livermore Falls area. I am retired from the Rumford Paper Mill, where I was a multi-craft Mechanical Millwright and a proud member of USW Local 900, and current President of the Western Maine Labor Council

Thank you for this opportunity to express my opposition to LD 187, HP 0120—a so-called “right-to-work” bill designed to weaken unions under the false premise of worker freedom.

Current law ensures that all employees covered by a union contract contribute their fair share for representation. This bill removes that requirement, allowing workers to receive union-negotiated wages, benefits, and protections without paying—legalized freeloading. Unions are legally required to represent all employees in a bargaining unit, so those who opt out still get the same wages, healthcare, and job security as dues-paying members. It’s only fair that they contribute a service fee for those benefits—just as they would for any other service.

This bill isn’t about protecting workers, it’s about dividing them, lowering morale, and financially weakening unions for corporate gain. Even the Chamber of Commerce, which supports right-to-work laws, requires its members to pay dues.

It’s important to recognize the origins of right-to-work laws. In the 1940s, Texas lobbyist Vance Muse, known for his racist and anti-Semitic views, promoted these laws to maintain segregation and weaken labor unions. He warned that without such laws, “white women and white men will be forced into organizations with black African apes whom they will have to call ‘brother’ or lose their jobs.” As a side note, Muse also worked to oppose women’s suffrage and repeal child labor laws—showing exactly whose interests he was protecting.

It is no coincidence that states with right-to-work laws have lower wages, higher poverty, more consumer debt, and worse healthcare access than states without them. The goal of this bill is clear: to silence the collective voice of workers, drive down wages, and weaken job protections.

With union approval at an all-time high and more workers organizing across the country and here in Maine, we should be passing laws that support workers—not ones like LD 187, HP 0120 that undermine them. To our Republican representatives, I urge you to stand with Maine workers, not out-of-state corporate interests. Reject this bill and support legislation that truly empowers workers and strengthens our communities.

I urge you to reject LD 187, HP 0120.

Thank you.