

Nathan Proper- President, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America Local 3073

LD 874 Testimony

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Good afternoon, members of the committee.

My name is Nathan Proper. I'm a proud Mainer, a union carpenter, and the president of Local 3073 at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. I represent hundreds of civilian defense workers directly—but today, I'm one of many here speaking for thousands of federal employees at the shipyard and across this state who keep our country running, often without thanks, and sometimes without even a paycheck.

I'm here today to speak in strong support of LD 874, because this bill does something simple but powerful: it steps up for workers when Washington steps out.

To be honest—Congress hasn't exactly been setting a gold standard for stability lately. Over the last decade, we've seen a disturbing pattern: budget deadlines come and go, shutdowns happen, and federal employees are left holding the bag. They're still expected to report to duty. The bills don't stop. Their work doesn't stop. But their pay does.

At the shipyard, we maintain the U.S. Navy's submarine fleet—vessels critical to our national security. These are high-stakes, technical jobs performed by welders, planners, mechanics, engineers—people who go through years of training and security clearance just to do what they

do. And during a shutdown? They're told: "Keep working, but we're not paying you until Congress gets its act together."

Now imagine being told that while trying to keep your mortgage current, feed your kids, and fill your gas tank so you can get to the job that you're not even getting paid to do.

LD 874 is a lifeline. It says to these workers, "You matter. Your sacrifice isn't invisible. And your community isn't going to let you drown while politicians in D.C. play games of political brinksmanship with your paycheck."

This bill, in allowing federal workers living in Maine to access interest-free loans for weeks or months of pay and thousands of dollars in the event of a government shutdown, is enough to keep the lights on. To hold off the credit card debt. To avoid falling behind on rent. And it means that when federal workers go to work during a shutdown, they can at least breathe a little easier knowing their state, our state, hasn't forgotten them.

Here's the plain truth: LD 874 costs the state very little in the grand scheme of things. But it says something huge. It says that Maine doesn't leave its workers behind. And in times like these, that message means everything.

I strongly urge you to support LD 874—not just for the sake of the workers I represent, but for every federal employee who calls Maine home and deserves a little dignity when Washington gets it wrong.

Thank you for your time.