



Testimony of David Kent  
President, Maine Farm Bureau  
in Opposition to LD 357, 588, 589

Good Morning Sen. Tipping, Rep. Roeder, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor. My name is David Kent and I'm President of the Maine Farm Bureau. Our legislative committee has reviewed LD 357, LD 588 and LD 589 and voted unanimously to oppose all three bills.

We are not opposed to the \$14.65/hour minimum wage in LD 357. In the field, the market determines the minimum wage that farmers have to pay which is \$20 to 22/hour in order to get help. What we are opposed to are the lawsuit rights for workers. This adds legal risks for farmers and duplicates protections already in place.

LD 588-Agricultural Employees Concerted Activity Protection Act. This gives farm workers the right to publish complaints and involve third parties, disrupting cooperation. It also gives them the right to private lawsuits, adding significant costs, especially on small farms.

LD 589-Agricultural Workers Under Wage and Hour Laws. This bill puts farm workers into the general wage laws, mandating overtime pay and strict rules that don't work in seasonal farming.

Please understand that farming is not like manufacturing. Farming is affected by the weather. The old saying "you have to make hay when the sun shines " is very true. Farmers have narrow windows to plant and harvest their crops to obtain the highest quality and yields.

Maine Farm Bureau has long advocated that farmers need a solution that balances a farm minimum wage with protections that protect the unique types of farming. These bills don't accomplish what farmers need. Please vote ought not to pass on all three bills.