

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Kimberly Tobias of Manchester, and I'm a Journeyman Wireman in the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 1253.

I'm here to speak neither for nor against LD 1868. In 2018 I got my electrical helpers license, and 6 months later I started working through IBEW 1253. I don't settle for less, and I knew I wanted to go the union route so I would have a good job to provide for my family.

In the last 5 years, the majority of my locals work has been renewable energy projects. I've worked on 23 solar fields, doing everything from putting up panels, to pulling cable, wiring weather stations, and testing and troubleshooting. Renewable energy has put a lot of meals on the tables of my brothers and sisters. It's provided us with an opportunity to not just live in Maine, but thrive here. Maine has an aging workforce, and the age of the average electrician is over 50, we need to provide the jobs along with environmental mindfulness to keep young people here.

This bill is almost perfect, but without strong labor standards that put Maine people to work, I'm not able to offer my full support.

Please consider a requirement of giving priority to contractors and constructors that participate in registered apprenticeship programs and allow us to continue working at home.

Thank you for your time and consideration.