



MAINE AFL-CIO

A Union of Unions Standing for Maine Workers
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Testimony of Maine AFL-CIO Legislative & Political Director, Adam Goode, in Support of LD 1168 “An Act to License Operators for Personnel Hoists and Employee Elevators”

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business, my name is Adam Goode. I’m the Legislative and Political Director of the Maine AFL-CIO. We represent 40,000 working people in the state of Maine. We work to improve the lives and working conditions of our members and all working people. We testify in support of LD 1168.

LD 1168 makes two changes that will protect the safety of workers related to the use of elevators and outside hoists. It establishes the Elevator Advisory Board and it requires licensure for working people who are operators of personnel hoists. This legislation creates exceptions to licensure requirements for short-term emergency operation and operation by inspectors and operation of automatic operation or continuous pressure operation passenger or freight elevators or existing shipper rope elevators.

We work with two affiliate unions, the International Union of Elevator Constructors (IUEC) and the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) who would be involved in elevator work and installation of a hoist. Under current practice in Maine, the IUEC mechanic completes the installation and turns it over to someone who has limited or no experience with the unit. It is important that the people operating the hoist understand the safety mechanisms in place. A licensure system will help fix this problem.

More and more buildings are being constructed vertically in our state. This means we see outside elevators and outside hoists on construction sites on a regular basis. We work closely with IUOE Local 4, who are leaders in their industry and who follow high standards in operations training and safety. IUOE Local 4 has shared that after an elevator is installed by a licensed elevator mechanic, there is not a licensed operating engineer to turn that elevator over to someone who understands safety and operating issues related to the hoist.

We anticipate that IUOE and IUEC leaders can share with the committee the specific skills their trained staff are carrying out on job sites regularly. Any heavy equipment operation poses some level of threat to worker and public safety. IUOE is heavily invested in joint labor-management training programs that are committed to safety. Ensuring licensed operating engineers are working on job sites and that elevator constructors have oversight from an advisory board will help protect everyone’s safety.

There are currently safety concerns in having an unlicensed person work in an elevator hoist way. If an elevator car has unintended movement there is a potential situation that could put people in danger. It is easy for a person not familiar with the hazards associated with an elevator to cause such a situation to develop. The easy scenario to think of is a person entering an elevator hoist way to retrieve a dropped item prior to that elevator being “made safe” by a licensed professional.

For these same reasons, we strongly support the reinstatement of the Elevator Advisory Board.

LD 1168 creates the relevant exceptions to provide for short-term emergency operation while providing protection from scenarios where unlicensed people might fail to eliminate a hazard on a jobsite. We urge the committee to support LD 1168.