

Testimony in Support of LD 1839

An Act to Strengthen the So-called Hire-a-Vet Program

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor

Submitted by Dick Dyer, Destination Occupation

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor.

I am Dick Dyer, Co-owner of Destination Occupation and a resident of Winthrop, Maine. I am speaking in support of LD 1839 and I will make this testimony brief.

For more than eight years, I have voluntarily worked with the Maine Hire-a-Vet program under the Maine Department of Labor. I was invited into a subcommittee of this group to help find ways to promote their fledgling efforts to stand up public facing events that would encourage the employment of veterans and their spouses in Maine. In addition this organization and the events that they produce bring great attention to a variety of services offered publicly and privately to help veterans and their families.

Efforts to promote were hampered by the lack of funding to help pay for basic rent of a variety of facilities to house the event, supporting costs associated with the event and modest promotional efforts. Every attempt has been made, where possible to assure that free services were not overlooked and that costs were kept down.

Early on, I suggested that we try to obtain donations from companies in Maine who are deeply interested in hiring veterans. With that notion, Destination Occupation worked with the HAV Committee to solicit donations to cover a pre-approved budget. For their donations, companies got credit for their support of HAV and a placement near the presentation stage in the event.

A couple of years ago, it was determined that these donations might constitute or be seen to be compromising for the Department of Labor to oversee labor laws and policies including for companies who donated to this HAV cause. The efforts to solicit were stopped.

This legislation, LD 1839, provides some distance between the Department and the companies who want to support Maine Hire-A-Vet and hopefully provide needed private funding for the promotion of HAV services.