

Kenneth Keiran
Union Farm Equipment

Good Morning,

My name is Ken Keiran. My wife, Debby, and I are the owners of Union Farm Equipment on route 17 in Union and I am writing this in opposition of LD358.

Our thirty five employees sell and service Kubota tractors, light construction equipment and various brands of outdoor power equipment. We are proud of our 70 plus year history and of our reputation as 'The Friendly Folks' and for treating our customers in a manner in which we hope they will treat us.

Among our many accolades and awards is designation as the Retail Association of Maine '2018 Maine Retailer of the Year', numerous years as inclusion of the Best of the Best, and the '2017 Maine Disabilities Employer of the Year'. This award has special meaning to me as it was not given because we employ a hearing impaired individual, but because our facility meets and exceeds all ADA rules and regulations.

In short, we make every effort to provide as pleasant a work environment as possible because we understand happy and comfortable employees treat our customers better. They perform better, enjoy better job satisfaction and, as our low employee turnover will attest, like where they work.

In 2016, we made a major renovation and expansion to our showroom and our service facilities. At the time, we had Efficiency Maine review the plans and make recommendations as we were contemplating the inclusion of air conditioning. They strongly urged us to forego the idea as it would have been incredibly wasteful and inefficient given the fact our shop is in excess of 10,000 square feet with three large access doors. And as there are nine technicians working in this area, the doors are constantly being opened to move equipment in or out. And while our business is slower in the Winter and the team is able to work together to better coordinate the opening of doors, there are still huge fluctuations in temperature even though we have multiple heating units installed. It is simply the nature of our business and as we do live in Maine, we expect it to get cold and dress accordingly. Per Efficiency Maine recommendations, we installed ceiling fans throughout of facilities to aid heating and cooling efforts.

Conversely, our office staff is constantly debating what level of heat or air conditioning is reasonable. It is left to the group to decide where the thermostat should be set and it is not uncommon to see some in short sleeves while another is wearing a heavier shirt or perhaps a sweater.

Disregarding the fact that at our facility we would struggle to maintain and conform to any heat range requirement in our shop while simultaneously creating a situation of winners and losers in our office, I cannot begin to imagine the economic and associative environmental impact of creating such standards.

As I think about this legislation, I cannot help but think of President Jimmy Carter telling the nation that we, like him, needed to put on a sweater and do our part by turning down our thermostat to save untold energy and reduce our dependence on foreign oil.

I do not see any of this as being need of Legislative engagement. As an employer, I think it my responsibility to create as positive and pleasant a work environment as possible, and if other employers do not share this view, I think it for them to fail as they will suffer from lower employee moral and high turnover.