

TESTIMONY OF JEFF MCCABE, DIRECTOR OF POLITICS & LEGISLATION
MSEA/SEIU, LOCAL 1989 BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOR
AND HOUSING

LD 319

An Act to Promote Socially Responsible Investing by the Maine Public Employees Retirement
System Prohibiting Investment in the Fossil Fuel Industry or For-profit Prisons.

FEBRUARY 24, 2021

Senator Rafferty, Representative Sylvester, members of the Labor and Housing Committee; my name is Jeff McCabe, Director of Politics & Legislation for The Maine State Employees Association Service Employees International Union, Local 1989 (MSEA-SEIU, Local 1989). Maine State Employees Association is a labor union that represents approximately 13,000 workers, retirees and public sector workers statewide. This testimony mirrors our testimony on LD 99 with the addition of the fact we believe there should not be a for a “For Profit Private Prison Industry”. Approximately 75% of the Workers we represent through collective bargaining agreements are participants in the Maine Public Employees Retirement system. They are workers who are currently contributing towards their future retirement benefits. We also represent retiree members who receive a monthly pension benefit based on their years of service to the State of Maine or another public sector employer.

We are here today to testify neither for nor against the bill as we recognize that first and foremost, we have not provided retirement security to thousands of public sector retirees. We have not afforded them the quality of life they deserve. Instead, we have each year given them uncertainty by the looming threat of freezing cost of living increases, taxing their public pension and by not making up for their loss in social security benefits.

At the same time, we recognize that many of members are leading efforts on behalf of the great state of Maine to fight and mitigate climate change. We believe the fight for environmental justice is linked to the fights for economic, immigrant and racial justice because the effects from climate change and environmental dangers disproportionately affect the neighborhoods and jobs of working people.

Our communities, our planet, and our future depend on a climate movement that reaches all corners of this country but we recognize the fiduciary responsibility of MePERS and of this legislature and future legislatures.

I am happy to take any questions.