



March 1, 2021

Good morning Senator Rafferty, Representative Sylvester and members of the Committee on Labor and Housing. My name is Lewis Overlock and I am the Business Manager of Local 327 of the Laborers' International Union of North America. I am a resident of Hermon, an 22-year member of the Laborers' Union and I sit before you today to urge your support of LD 469, "An Act to Ensure Safety across Maine's Construction Industry."

I represent over 300 working women and men who work their craft on job sites across the state: from buildings to bridges, solar installations to pipelines, roads to paper mills: to name but a few. One common trait among all of those job sites is that no matter where we work, the most important thing is to return home safely after an honest day's work.

That's why LD 469 is so important to our industry. Right now, we know that there is no assurance that workers on the jobsite have a baseline of safety knowledge. I can tell you from my members' and my own experience that there are certainly workers on sites in Maine who don't have this training. That said, we may hear that this is unnecessary and that most workers do. If that's true we still know that "most" is not "all." And we also know that a worker who lacks basic safety knowledge is a dangerous worker, plain and simple.

The Laborers' union provides a 30-hour OSHA training course to all apprentices who go through our training academy. And that we ensure our current journey workers have at, at a minimum, OSHA 10, before sending them onto a jobsite. We also know that contractors are increasingly mandating this requirement. Why? Because aside from it lowering their liability and it making financial sense, they know that a safety-trained worker is more efficient, effective and works better with the rest of the team.

I support LD 469 not because it will help my members, but because it will help set the standard for the entire construction industry. Accidents on the job and their aftermath don't discriminate between union and non-union. Accidents don't discriminate between political party. I hope that the members of this committee agree that setting a common safety standard on a statewide level is a good public policy. As buildings get taller, equipment gets more complex and workers are being asked to do more intricate work on the jobsite, it's more important than ever for us to have a

common level of safety knowledge across the industry. I urge the committee to vote ought to pass on LD 469. Thank you and I am happy to take any questions you might have,

Lewis Overlock
Business Manager
Laborers' International Union of North America, Local 327
loverlock@local327laborers.org
(207) 458-7700

Resident: Hermon, Maine