

LD 648 Testimony from Chuck Fraser, Business Manager, IBEW Local 1253,  
Fairfield, Maine

[chuck@ibew1253.org](mailto:chuck@ibew1253.org)

207-441-0229

Good morning, Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester and members of the Laboring and Housing Committee. My name is Chuck Fraser, I live in Newburgh and I'm the Business Manager of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Local 1253 located in Fairfield. I represent approximately 250 Master, Journeyman and apprentice electricians with a jurisdiction from Lincoln to Bowdoin and Wilton to Eastport. I rise today in support of LD 648, An Act to Improve the Lives of Maine Workers by Supporting Apprenticeships that Lead to Good-paying Jobs.

In September 1985 I started my apprenticeship in Local 1253. Acceptance into Local 1253's apprenticeship started me on a rewarding career that paid me a fair wage, provided me health insurance for my family and pensions so I can retire with dignity. Today the Maine Apprenticeship Program is cutting funding for top-of-the-line apprenticeship and awarding the money to any program that dots the I's and crosses the T's. An example is an electrical company that recently was granted an apprenticeship by the State. The owner received his training through Local 1253's apprenticeship and was a signatory contract with Local 1253. For nearly 20 years he was a contributor and benefactor of the Local's apprenticeship as a Local 1253 contractor. He left the Local and now has an approved State program that starts his apprentices at \$12.15 an hour and they top out at \$20.00 an hour with no health insurance or pension.

Clearly not all apprenticeships are created equally. LD 648 needs to pass so apprenticeships that provide a fair wage, health insurance, pensions and working conditions versus apprenticeships that provide substandard wages, no health insurance and no pensions are funded appropriately. Programs that potentially leave their apprentices in need of State assistance being treated equally with programs that provide fair wages and health insurance is wrong. The passage of

LD 648 will fund apprenticeships at levels equal to their quality. The better the program, the better the funding.

Thank you for your time,  
Chuck Fraser