



Testimony of Steve Perry to oppose LD 1633

“An Act to Require Responsible Contracting Practices for Public Contracting Projects”

Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing, my name is Steve Perry. I am a resident of Lincoln and here today as an employee-owner of Sargent Corporation. I am here today to testify in opposition LD 1633.

Sargent Corporation's 350+ employees work in seven states and are led by a field management team boasting over 1,000 years of combined experience. The company was founded in 1926, nearly one hundred years working here in Maine. In 2013 Sargent became 100% employee-owned, a milestone for all my fellow owners.

Currently Maine already has a prequalification process for contractors to bid on large (\$10 million or more) public work projects. Construction projects of all types and sizes are completed safely by Maine firms every day. Maine contractors are recognized by national associations for their safety records yearly.

We have invested in the safety and education of all our employee-owners. Our experience modification rating, the calculation used to price worker's compensation insurance, is at .57, and as you most likely know, companies with an average safety record receives a rating of 1.0, Most Clients looking for safe responsible contractors will not hire anyone above EMR rating 1.0.

Adopting a safety culture is more than being competitive. It knows your company values the health and well-being of the entire team. One of our successes is the continued investment into our "Sargent Academy". We select highly motivated folks interested in working for Sargent to attend our private academy and learn the trade with classroom and hands-on instruction in the field. From the beginning, they are Sargent employees. Education and continuous learning do not end after the academy. We continue to build the skillsets providing every new hire our safety and company orientation. In the field, we conduct weekly safety inspections, and under a new initiative, we have a goal of providing one safety inspector for every seven employees. Sargent's safety record has been nationally recognized year after year when compared to firms across the country.

The language included in this bill (part B) requiring contractors to sign a PLA put unfair pressure on our workers to have no choice but to carry a union card in their back pocket before they are qualified to work on large scale public projects. Let the “free market” decide the winners of projects and allowing merit shop contractors a fair opportunity.

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Merit shop is about open competition and free enterprise, regardless of labor affiliation. Not only should the best developer win a project, that developer should be able to hire union companies or non-union companies.

It should be about the getting the highest-quality product and providing the lowest price to the taxpayers with a strong history of safety first on every job site. This type of freedom is what drives us to believe that companies should be judged on their merits when they are competing for projects, rather than simply their labor affiliations.

Sargent Corporation believes in fair and open competition, union and non-union firms can (and often do) work together to deliver safe, high-quality construction projects.

With rebuilding our U.S. Infrastructure on the minds of both Federal and State policy makers we will need all hands-on deck to deliver these projects to the taxpayers at a price that we all can live.

Please vote against this bill.

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