



Testimony in Opposition to LD 555: “[An Act To Expand the Rights of Public Sector Employees](#)”

Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester, and the distinguished members of the Committee on Labor and Housing, my name is Nick Murray and I serve as policy analyst for Maine Policy Institute, a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that advocates for individual liberty and economic freedom in Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on LD 555.

Passage of this bill would spell a costly endeavor for taxpayers. While LD 555 excludes employees who protect public safety, there are several other governmental functions that would be hindered if public employees are granted the right to strike, negatively affecting taxpayers and the public at-large.

Public entities are simply not the same as private companies. Employees’ rights in the public and private sectors are fundamentally different, and for good reason. First and foremost, public-sector employees’ paychecks are issued by the government and funded by taxpayers. If public services are ground to a halt from an employee strike, all taxpayers, not willing investors or consumers, are on the hook for those costs.

If the employees of a private company go on strike, consumers can shop elsewhere during the strike. If government workers go on strike, Mainers who need to interact with a healthcare facility, licensing agency, or public school would have no other outlet to receive these crucial services.

For instance, if teachers decided to strike, it would certainly cause undue burden on parents who may not be able to make the necessary arrangements, logistically or financially. Students would be robbed of their education, potentially for an unspecified amount of time. Similarly, if a town’s municipal workers went on strike, residents would not be able to register their car, file a marriage license, or vote early.

Allowing public employees to strike would give their collective bargaining agents even more leverage over the agencies which employ them. If services are hindered for long enough, officials would be more inclined to give in to union demands, even if it means incurring unsustainable debt. This might mean spending taxpayers funds the town or agency cannot afford to appease employees on strike.

It’s also worth noting that public workers are faring well, despite not wielding the threat of a strike in 39 states. The average public sector employee makes 12% more than

the average private sector employee.¹ Please deem LD 555 “Ought Not To Pass” to ensure the state’s fiscal stability and continuity of Mainers’ vital public services. Thank you for your time and consideration.

¹ Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates | [Cross-industry, private ownership; Federal, state, and local government](#) | May 2020