



Testimony in Opposition to LD 1756: “An Act to Protect Employee Freedom of Speech”

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and the distinguished members of the Committee on Labor and Housing, my name is Nick Murray and I serve as director of policy for Maine Policy Institute. We are a free market think tank, a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that advocates for individual liberty and economic freedom in Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to testify **in opposition to LD 1756**.

Ironically, this bill seeks to protect workers from being fired if they choose to not attend a required meeting for their job. If an employer is sponsoring a meeting which it requires as a condition of employment, and an employee refuses, the state has no right to step in the middle of that relationship and give the employee private cause of action to sue.

It is simply not the role of government to outline the minutiae of every worker’s job description. It is not the state’s job to protect employees who refuse to do their job. Incredibly, LD 1756 would allow employees who do not fulfill the requirements of their job, to sue their employer. It is absurd.

LD 1756 unintentionally diminishes the First Amendment right of employers, in an attempt to protect the rights of workers. One’s rights end where another’s begin, therefore the government cannot protect the rights of one if doing so infringes on the rights of another.

Tellingly, this bill exempts “religious employers,” presumably because the sponsor knows that it would infringe on that employer’s free speech and association rights. If that is the case, then what makes a “non-religious employer” subject to this sort of governmental interference into their free association rights?

The irony and absurdity of this bill is compounded further given the fact that the sponsor is OK with workers being compelled to financially support a union as a condition of employment, but not with workers being compensated to attend employer-sponsored meetings. This bill turns the status quo of employment law on its head.

Please **deem LD 1756 “Ought Not To Pass”** and focus on protecting the free association rights of all Mainers, instead of on boldly unconstitutional attempts to silence the speech of employers. Thank you for your time and consideration.