

TESTIMONY OF BATH IRON WORKS CORPORATION IN SUPPORT OF
L.D. 542, AN ACT TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR MILITARY MEMBERS TRANSITIONING TO
CIVILIAN LIFE IN MAINE

BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

MARCH 8, 2021

Sen. Luchini, Rep. Caiazzo and members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, Bath Iron Works Corporation's Director of Human Resources Services Allyson Coombs hereby submits this testimony in support of L.D. 542.

With the recent introduction of legislation on Act LD 542, "An Act to Provide Support for Military Members Transition to Civilian Life in Maine", it is with great privilege that I share Bath Iron Works' recent achievements that will help attract our veterans and develop our Maine economy.

BIW is a full service shipyard specializing in the design, construction, and support of complex surface combatants for the United States Navy. We currently employ over 6,800 people with primary operations in Bath and Brunswick, Maine. BIW is embarking on an aggressive hiring campaign in an effort to continue to meet the needs of the United States Navy. As such, BIW is committed to working with various outlets to ensure we create a diverse and inclusive work force by recruiting under represented persons and those from beyond our state lines.

Currently, BIW employs more than 1,000 individuals who have self-identified as veterans. These men and women bring a level of commitment to BIW that adds to the motto of "Bath Built is Best Built." The men and women who have served in the United States Military have a vested interest in ensuring the ships built at BIW withstand the challenges associated with defending our nation.

BIW has partnered with various veteran groups, to include Boots2Roots, in an effort to provide opportunities to individuals transitioning to civilian life. These relationships work to assist active-duty and recently separated members find meaningful work in Maine while providing a vital pipeline of military talent to BIW as well as other employers in the State of Maine. Additionally, this presents an opportunity for these service members and their families to bring much needed resources to a struggling work force in Maine.

As one of the main sponsors to the Maine Hire-A-Vet program, BIW has led the way in hiring veterans in Maine. In 2020, the U.S. Department of Labor awarded BIW its HIRE Vets Platinum Medallion, reflecting our efforts to hire, retain and support veterans.

GENERAL DYNAMICS
Bath Iron Works

Last year, the Department of Defense's Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve presented BIW with its ProPatria Award for our support for those employees who choose to continue their military service in the National Guard or Reserves while working at BIW. BIW recognizes the commitment the men and women of the armed forces bring to the security of this nation and support their continued dual role in defending our nation by building destroyers and answering the call to duty.

We are a committed partner in the Department of Defense's SkillBridge program. SkillBridge provides an opportunity for active duty military personnel to participate in internships and pre-apprenticeship programs with private industry in the final six months of their military service. Within the last 12 months, BIW has been fortunate enough to hire five interns through SkillBridge. Two of the five have transitioned to full time employees.

BIW continues to work with a network of partners to identify underrepresented individuals who can add to the continued success of BIW. With BIW's aggressive hiring campaign we are excited to not only hire members of the military but hire individuals from all walks of life.

BIW welcomes the opportunity to contribute the Maine community as well as the economy, and working together, this is one vector to do just that. BIW looks forward to working with the Committee and the Legislature as you consider this legislation.

Thank you,

Allyson Coombs
Director, HR Service
General Dynamics Bath Iron Works