

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF LD 1769

### AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN THE STATE PURCHASING CODE OF CONDUCT LAWS

Senator Schneider, Representative Barstow, members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government:

My name is Mary Anne Turowski and I am here today representing Maine State Employees Association- Service Employees International Union, Local 1989. MSEA is an 11,000 member union, of which the majority are state workers. This workforce wears the products purchased by the State of Maine under this code of conduct as established by the rule-making process.

MSEA-SEIU, in the past, has gone on record as supporting the original legislation creating this state purchasing code of conduct, as well as the rule-making process. This code of conduct, spelled out in Title 5 Section A-1, MRSA 1825-L, is for businesses contracting with the State of Maine via the competitive bid process to provide apparel, footwear or textiles. It requires that businesses comply with laws pertaining to wages, health and safety, labor and the environment; freedom of association, building and fire codes, and anti-discrimination laws. LD 1769 strengthens the current code of conduct by instituting a complaints and investigations process, spells out consequences for non-compliance, and establishes a working group that shall make recommendations pertaining to the use of an independent monitor to investigate alleged violations of the state purchasing code of conduct.

MSEA-SEIU applauds the Department of Administrative and Financial Services for submitting LD 1769, as well as the Legislature, for having the foresight to pass the original code of conduct. The State of Maine can continue to lead by example by purchasing products that are made by workers who, at the very least, are protected by the laws of their land and all applicable labor and human rights treaties already in place.

Maine has paid a high price in the global marketplace, as we have seen our once thriving shoe and textile manufacturers outsourced to countries with a low wage workforce. By outsourcing, a company can choose to further enhance their bottom-line by ignoring the labor and health and safety laws of that nation. LD 1769 seeks to eliminate the contractor who gains an unfair competitive advantage by choosing not to conduct their business based on the laws of the land, thus lowering the contract's cost.

By supporting LD 1769 you can make a choice today that upholds and strengthens Maine's practice of purchasing products from those vendors who obey the applicable laws of the country in which the goods are assembled.

Thank you for your time.



DANA GRAHAM  
President

BRUCE HODSDON  
Vice President

TIMOTHY L. BELCHER  
Executive Director

MAINE STATE EMPLOYEES  
ASSOCIATION, LOCAL 1989  
SERVICE EMPLOYEES  
INTERNATIONAL UNION  
AFL-CIO, CLC

P.O. BOX 1072  
65 State Street  
Augusta, ME 04332-1072  
207-622-3151  
1-800-452-8794  
Fax: 207-623-4916  
mseaseiu@mseaseiu.org  
Web Page: www.mseaseiu.org

