

April 8, 2013- Testimony on **LD 1201 HP 845**
Patrick O'Brien
170 Cobbs Bridge Road
New Gloucester, Maine

Good Afternoon. By way of introduction, my name is Pat O'Brien. I've worked for 35 years in the healthcare industry as a senior manager. I have a MBA and a 2-year advanced certificate in Healthcare Policy and Management. I've held Director and Vice President roles in Maine's two largest medical centers and have had 3 governor's appointments to State healthcare advisory boards and a political appointment as a regional systems director for Northern and Eastern Maine. I've run two New-England based consulting firms serving over 80 medical centers, government and community organizations.

I also have a related Federal Court case pending for next month that I will not address at length today ...but would love to share at some point.

Based on years of rather unique experience, I've come across many businesses in Maine and elsewhere that have good policies in place and understand existing law. Thankfully, they demonstrate rigor and self-discipline when an employee's well-being is at stake.

Unfortunately, because the existing laws are so porous, the thresholds so onerous and the enforcement so weak, some business will take the easy road and simply concentrate their power on the individual employee, rather than investing in progressive management practices. To think that an employer cannot induce fear, intimidation and isolation in the workplace is to blink at reality.

Of course, the consequences for the employee and their families can be horrific. But ultimately, these businesses that think they can get away with this kind of action will never understand success. They will, however, continue to contribute to a general business environment that brings us all "back to the cave". The real manifestations will be low morale, an uncommitted workforce, shoddy products, increases in healthcare, workman's compensation and legal costs... and, poorer profits to name a few.

Thank you Representative Gideon and Dr. Gerber. I hope the Committee will recognize the wisdom and long-term benefits for all Maine citizens associated with this legislation.

I'll be happy to try and answer any questions.