



## **Testimony to the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs**

### **LD 258 - An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025**

February 12, 2023

Dear Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs,

I am Amberlynn Esperanza, President of PROPEL, a branch of the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce that mentors and teaches young professionals on how to be confident, grow in their careers, professional networks, and to network easier through our events.

PROPEL's mission is to enrich Maine's economy by developing a culture and environment where young professionals thrive in the region's growing business community.

We at PROPEL were so excited to have joined the Realize Maine Network in order to provide our organization with a microphone that promotes the work we are currently doing. Our board members are working hard to break down barriers of entry and to pave the way for other young professionals to go for the top and for their dreams. Our biggest networking event, the PROPEL Annual Ignition Awards, highlights the achievements of young professionals in our community. We currently have 681 followers on LinkedIn, 3,100 followers on Facebook, and 2,323 followers on Instagram.

Being passionate about driving Maine's economy, we see that there is a stronger need for diversity in top management, leadership skills, and support for entrepreneurs. Our organization and the funding from the Realize Maine Network would provide more opportunities for young professionals in Greater Portland and beyond. The PROPEL group also inspires and supports others to volunteer and give back to the community. We do this through education, training, and our networking events that often highlight non-profit organizations. We use our social media

platforms and events to host webinars, interview members of the community, and mentor one another.

PROPEL Board Members have found significant challenges in our own leadership experiences and found a great need for more professional self improvement, meaningful connections with others, and skill building opportunities. PROPEL hopes to acquire funding from the Realize Maine Network to combat these challenges we face today.

While the internet and technology make it so easy to research and learn about anything in the world, there is just so much information that we often do not know where to start. By having the funding to support our programming and working together with others at the Realize Maine Network, we will be able to provide a better way for leaders like myself to be more impactful in our communities. Joining RMN helps us become more aware about the most important and pressing issues around the state while growing our professional networks with other members. The efforts grow exponentially when we work together statewide.

We appreciate your consideration for funding, and our organization looks forward to continuing to build up and strengthen the next generation of business leaders in Maine.

Sincerely,

*Amberlynn Esperanza*

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