



April 13, 2023

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and Members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today. My name is Anne Patterson, and I am the Director at Mt. Desert Island Adult and Community Education. I have worked in this role for 10 years. I also worked for RSU 24 Adult Ed for three years.

I am here today to testify in support of **LD 1367 - An Act Regarding the Funding Formula for Adult Education**. Adult education is an important organization in Maine, and it's time that the legislature made the move to fund it completely. While the money being asked for in this bill is only a start to move adult education to full funding, it's an essential start.

My program consists of myself (full-time) and one full-time teacher. The local share for my program was \$143,000 this year. My subsidy was just under \$48,000. The subsidy has dropped in recent years. If we were getting fully subsidized, we would be receiving just over \$103,000.

If we were subsidized at the full rate, we'd be able to add a **part-time ESL instructor or additional help for our high school completion students**, especially for evening classes which, at this time, we cannot offer. Just this past month (March) **our active academic student population doubled**. If we get many more referrals, we may have to defer them until fall.

Two factors have precipitated this increase in students: **refugees** from Ukraine needing language instruction and a dramatic increase in the number of students coming from the **high school whose education was severely impacted by COVID**. Both of these groups require intensive instruction. We need more instructors who can extend our current learning center hours and help with the surge of incoming students.

Three of our young (17-18) students are also the parents of at least one child. **One young lady** came to us in the fall. She was juggling childcare for both children, living with a family member in tight quarters, and traveling 20+ miles to get to our program. She prepared for and took the HiSET passing with very solid scores. We also got her enrolled in an online Behavioral Health Professional Certificate class. We recently learned that she has a job using her BHP certificate and is about to get her own place to live. **This student is exemplary of how adult education can turn people's lives around for the better.**

Another quick story: **A young Jamaican girl** came to us in 2016. It took her a few years to work through the HiSET program, but she passed. She also took a C.N.A. class and worked as a C.N.A. for a while. In 2019 she joined the U.S. Navy and also became a U.S. citizen. Currently she is in **nursing school**.

Both of these young women have added great value to their communities, all because they came through an adult education program. It works!

As you can see, Maine Adult Education is an important workforce and educational partner in the statewide system. Adult Education programs need to be fully funded to be able to meet the goals of helping every adult in need gain the necessary skills to gain employment or enter post secondary education.

Thank you for your time today.

Sincerely,

Anne Patterson

Anne Patterson, MS Ed

Director

apatterson@mdirss.org

207-288-4703