

Cameron Beers' Testimony on LD 210

Cameron Beers

Second-Year Welding Student

Eastern Maine Community College

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Senator Rotundo, Senator Rafferty, Representative Gattine, Representative Murphy, and Members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Cameron Beers. My hometown is Eddington, Maine, and I am a second-year Eastern Maine Community College student. I am here to testify in support of the portion of LD210 that funds the Maine Free College Program and general operating costs at the Maine Community College System.

I have accomplished much success within the past year and a half at EMCC. Previously, I completed a year of welding at the United Technology Center in Bangor. When graduating high school, I, like many of my peers, was unsure where my place was in the wide field of academia and the vast community of hard-working Mainers. While I can attribute a large portion of my success to exceptional educators like my mom, free college has given me the grace to consider the career path I would like to take and how I will adjust to our society.

While I was unsure of the path I was going to take within the community college system, continuing my trade gave me an extra tool in my belt that I knew I could always fall back on. While some students use this as a way to save money on their general education classes and continue to larger universities, others complete certifications and degrees varying from welding and other trades to nursing, radiology, business, and much more. I have considered the possibility of transferring to the University of Maine after graduation to further my education and make myself a productive member of society. College has also led me to further explore my interests, by seeking clubs such as the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society which I am now proudly

co-president of, and is teaching me new ways of leadership that can't always be taught in a textbook.

To summarize, I can attest that free college is worth the state's expense to change the lives of hundreds of young adults who may be lost and seeking answers to their future or just need a bit more time. For other young adults, this may be the only time they can obtain a good college education, in turn creating well-rounded individuals leading into the world with confidence. It would bring me great joy to see more of our youth be afforded the same opportunity as me and I appreciate the consideration of my testimony.