

TESTIMONY REGARDING L.D. 396

An Act to Provide for a Later Starting Time for High Schools

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

My name is Rob Callahan, and I am a Maine Administrators of Career and Technical Education (MACTE) member and Director of the Lewiston Regional Technical Center. I am testifying today on behalf of Maine's CTE Directors, who believe L.D. 396 Ought Not to Pass.

This bill would require that, beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, all secondary schools in Maine start no earlier than 8:30 a.m. While we understand the intent behind this proposal, our CTE Directors have significant concerns about its impact on Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and students' ability to participate in hands-on, career-focused training. Specifically, we raise the following issues:

- **Impact on Employers:** Many local businesses depend on high school students for after-school employment—this change would inhibit the ability of employers to fill shifts and students to earn much-needed wages.
- **Local Control:** School start times should be determined by local school districts based on their unique needs.
- **Scheduling Flexibility:** Would the bill allow for variation in start times across different schools within the same district?
- **Transportation Challenges:** With ongoing driver shortages and rising fuel costs, how would districts manage new bus schedules? In addition, students who travel to CTE Centers and Regions often have significant travel time each day. This new start time would keep them from home, work, or family commitments later in the afternoon.
- **CTE Instructional Hours:** Can we ensure that students receive the required 350 hours of CTE instruction without disruption? The addition of such requirements may inhibit a student's ability to access CTE programming.
- **Conflicts with Extracurricular Activities:** Later dismissal times could lead to scheduling challenges for sports and other after-school programs.
- **Compounding Time Loss:** Early release days would further reduce CTE instructional time, exacerbating scheduling constraints.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input on this matter and look forward to further discussions in future work sessions. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rob Callahan
Lewiston Regional Technical - Director

Maine Administrators of Career & Technical Education (MACTE)

