George Johnson
New York City
LD 787

Dear Members of the Committee on Educational and Cultural Affairs,

My name is George Johnson, and I am a proud graduate of the Maine School of Science and Mathematics (MSSM), Class of 2019. I went on to major in Computer Science and Economics at Pomona College, and I now work as a technology consultant for PricewaterhouseCoopers in New York City. Without question, MSSM provided me with the most valuable and transformative educational experience of my life.

The academic rigor at MSSM prepared me exceptionally well for college and my career. By the time I graduated, I was proficient in French and C++, and I had completed enough advanced mathematics to nearly qualify for a minor at Pomona. The school's environment fostered not just academic excellence but also personal growth. It provided a space where I could challenge myself, develop independence, and explore my interests alongside like-minded peers.

For neurodivergent students like myself, MSSM is especially crucial—it offers a safe, stimulating, and supportive environment where students can thrive both intellectually and socially. The faculty are second to none; their dedication extends beyond the classroom, and I remain close with several of my former teachers to this day. I truly would not be the person I am today without this school.

Despite all of this, MSSM operates with limited financial resources that constrain both students and teachers. To illustrate this, when I was on the track team, we learned triple jump without a functional jump pit—an amusing but telling example of the school's need for better funding. Increased investment in MSSM would enhance educational opportunities, improve facilities, and ensure that this institution continues to develop Maine's brightest students.

I strongly urge you to pass LD 787 and/or LD 1011 to increase funding for MSSM, ensuring that future students receive the same life-changing education that I did. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
George Johnson