

LINDA SOUERS

Friendship

LD 1462

April 16, 2025

Written Testimony in Support of LD 1462: "An Act to Promote Artisans and the Creative Economy"

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government:

I emphatically support LD 1462 and ask all of you to vote Ought to Pass on this legislation.

As a former high school art teacher and current artist, I know the immense benefit of nurturing, practicing, and observing creative expression of all forms in our lives. Artistic expression takes many forms individual to the creator and is a critical element of communication in every culture.

Creative, artistic individuals and groups are also a vital economic force in Maine. I currently live in Friendship, and we have several artists living in our town who open their studios to the public for the purpose of showing and selling their art. They may also work with others on fairs and sidewalk sales. What a boon to the community, and a draw for visitors and tourists, as Maine nurtures its "tourist economy".

The City of Rockland is a great example of nurturing arts in action. My husband and I frequently enjoy "First Friday Art Walk", evenings once a month of open art galleries and studios, the Farnsworth Museum, street musicians and other demonstrations of creative expression. This is the "art economy" in practice. It would be a huge loss, indeed, if the city decided one day that the increased traffic, noise, artistic content, or crowded streets were an inconvenience, or worse, and passed a local ordinance to ban "First Friday Art Walk"!

This legislation would protect the sale of creative expression, or as the bill identifies it "expressive matter", from political, arbitrary, or whimsical regulations that the state or a municipality may want to impose to prohibit the vending of "expressive matter". The bill is correct to allow restrictions within reason based on health, safety and welfare concerns.

Please insure that all creative individuals and groups in Maine are allowed to promote and sell their art, in whatever form, for the sake of our families, friends and neighbors, and a healthy Maine economy. Please vote Ought to Pass on LD 1462.

Thank you for your consideration,

Linda D. Souers

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