

David Souers
Friendship
LD 1462

LD 1462 An Act to Promote Artisans and the Creative Economy

Senator Balducci, Representative Salsbury, Members of the Committee on State and Local Government, I am David Souers. I live in Friendship, Maine. I am a retired architect having worked in Syracuse, Boston, upstate New York and Maine. My wife and I have supported the arts in our work and with the communities that we have lived and worked in. I have promoted the inclusion of art with every client and in every project that I have worked on.

I am testifying in support of LD 1462.

My career in architecture was preceded by an excellent public school education including art classes. In preparation for college in architecture, I took private group studio art classes with a West Point art instructor. My exposure to art, along with drawings to demonstrate my serious interest in an art field, were a great help in securing offers from several recognized colleges of architecture. Once you have been exposed to art, both in school and out in the community, you recognize the beauty and value of both the creative activity and the products of artists. This all adds to the economic vitality to our communities. Art attracts people, businesses and careers.

It's important to recognize that everyone has potential to express themselves and create art in many ways which may not seem obvious, like making clothes, makeup, building indoor or outdoor constructions, baking, performing of all kinds. Each has an opportunity for visual, acoustic, environmental, time and space, personal and group, and many other methods of expression and creation.

Art can serve all kinds of purposes such as being useful and functional like furniture or housewares, handmade or crafted with tools, free form one of a kind or designed with patterns to be repeated, decorative adding to existing places and spaces, forms of communications. Everything has potential to be art and expression, when seen and created as art and expression. Art and art appreciation in a community tends to inspire more art. Each exposure and opportunity, from the very young to old, will promote more learning, seeing, experimenting and creating expressive matter.

Looking back on Rockland during the ship building days, the shipwrights and home builders using wood and tools developed and expressed their artistic skills in their work. As did those working in other trades and crafts. Art can be found in many areas of early and mid American times. Today Rockland, with help from the Farnsworth Museum and the Strand Theater, is said to be the art capitol of the Mid-coast. Our art community is not limited to museums and professionals. We see murals in our public schools. We have art walks, arts & craft fairs, gallery openings, and open artist studios and private houses. We have professional artists living off their art, working next to amateurs doing worthy work who have other careers. Some are carpenters creating paintings of their environments. Others are bankers, lawyers, cooks and bed & breakfast operators taking up art as a hobby and becoming members of art coops. Others are lobstermen's wives making art out of beach glass and abandoned fishing materials. Our neighbor's autistic grandchild showed his art, accumulated over ten years, in Thomaston's community building. The quality of his work was so good, that it sold out in the first hour, with requests for prints.

Art has taken Rockland and the Midcoast from casual working waterfronts, somewhat run down, with handfuls of summer season artists in the 1960s to vibrant year round art influenced communities. This should not be the end of the story. Many Mainers can still use and do much more with art in their lives with encouragement from early age to see the art in everything, appreciate it and to do it.

I advocate that LD 1462 ought to pass.