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Baxter Academy for Technology and Science
LD 1571

I am Vincent Aliquo, an alum of Baxter Academy, a charter school in Portland, Maine, which will be negatively affected by the proposed change. As part of the first graduating class, I've experienced firsthand the transformative power of education delivered by professionals with real-world expertise. Baxter Academy opened doors for me that traditional education could not, providing me with both technical skills and a passion for learning that continues to this day.

The education I received at Baxter directly contributed to my professional success. I felt more prepared going into college, and confident in my career path. Today, I serve as VP of Engineering at Haiku, Inc., where I lead teams building cybersecurity training used by both government and private sectors.

None of this would have been possible without the unique learning environment that Baxter Academy created, an environment enriched by educators who brought diverse, working experience directly into the classroom.

The proposed changes to this bill would deprive students of diverse and relevant professional knowledge. Teachers at Baxter Academy don't just teach theory, they demonstrate how that theory applies to solving real challenges students will face in their futures.

Changes to this bill will create barriers to recruiting top talent. Many exceptional professionals who could inspire the next generation would be excluded from teaching because they lack traditional certification.

It will limit project-based learning opportunities. My education at Baxter was defined by hands-on projects guided by professionals who understood their real-world applications.

And it will reduce innovation in education. Charter schools like Baxter Academy thrive by implementing innovative teaching methods often led by those with diverse backgrounds.

Some of my most influential teachers at Baxter were those who came directly from industry. Their perspective provides an invaluable foundation for student success.

I urge this committee to reject the changes to this bill and instead support policies that encourage diverse pathways into teaching. The future of education lies in connecting classroom learning to the real world. Baxter Academy clearly demonstrates that when we allow innovation in who teaches and how they teach, students benefit immensely. Let's not take a step backward by limiting the pool of qualified educators who can inspire our next generation.

...Please vote "ought not pass" on #1571.