

TESTIMONY NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST

L.D. 1163—AN ACT TO FOSTER CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION
IN MAINE SCHOOLS BY CREATING AN ADDITIONAL PATHWAY
TO CERTIFY INDUSTRIAL ARTS TEACHERS

AND

L.D. 1357—AN ACT TO CREATE ALTERNATIVE PATHWAYS FOR CERTIFICATION OR
ENDORSEMENT OF INDUSTRIAL ARTS TEACHERS

April 25, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Noonan Murphy, and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, I am Eileen King, the Deputy Executive Director of the Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and the Maine School Superintendents Association neither for nor against both L.D. 1163 and L.D. 1357.

Industrial arts programs were once a vital part of public schools across Maine, and thankfully, elements of these programs are once again growing. Career and Technical Education (CTE) program enrollment is at an all-time high. New CTE centers are opening up – and in some cases, immediately reaching capacity. Many districts are expanding these programs into middle schools and establishing “satellite sites” to allow younger students to explore engineering, woodworking, electrical work and other hands-on trades.

While we are proud of the growth in this hands-on programming, certification for traditional industrial arts teachers has not been modernized to match our school’s current needs. Industrial arts education programs no longer exist at Maine universities, leaving few options for those seeking to become certified as an industrial arts teacher. When school leaders look for new industrial arts teachers, they have received few, if any applicants – the candidates simply do not exist.

L.D.s 1163 and 1357 offer two pathways to help more applicants enter this profession. We believe both bills recognize industry knowledge and experience – apprenticeships, certificates, degrees, and years in the field – and make it easier for a more diverse pool of experienced professionals to enter our classrooms and teach our children. Our associations believe that any changes to certification should go through a comprehensive review of the Chapter 115 certification rules, which are currently being reviewed. We would like any proposed legislation to take a similar approach, which allows for state officials and those in the field to carefully consider legislative priorities while balancing the many other factors within the certification process.

Our associations also believe that these efforts are worthwhile complements to ongoing work at the State Board, where several district-level administrators are working with the Board to propose new certification pathways that would bring more knowledgeable, qualified professionals into the teaching field. Together, we believe this work could help revitalize industrial arts within our schools and provide students with more hands-on, project-based learning opportunities in their classrooms.