

Testimony in Support of

LD 1705 An Act Regarding Adult Education Funding and Oversight

April 28, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

My name is Shara Page, and I am the Director of MSAD1 Adult and Community Education in Presque Isle. I am also an active member of the Maine Adult Education Association (MAEA), and serve on the Association's Advocacy Committee.

I am writing to express both my personal, as well as MAEA's strong support for LD 1705, submitted by Representative Holly Sargent, which seeks to accomplish two critical and long-overdue actions for the benefit of Maine's adult learners.

1. Support for College and Career Success Coordinators

First, this bill requests state funding for the College and Career Success Coordinators (CCSCs)—a group of dedicated professionals who are hired by local adult education programs but based at each of Maine's seven community college campuses. These coordinators are the vital bridge between adult learners and successful postsecondary transitions.

I am the fiscal agent for the Maine Jobs Recovery Program (MJRP) grant that funds the CCSC position in Hub 2, which serves all of Aroostook County on the Northern Maine Community College (NMCC) campus. To say that this position has made a positive impact on our students and communities is an understatement. In the last quarter (1/1/25-3/31/25), our CCSC has served and supported 53 new students, 11 continuing students, made 7 workforce training referrals to local business partners, referred 6 students to adult education and made 79 inter-agency contacts!

Having a CCSC as an adult education representative and a familiar face on the NMCC campus has significantly eased the anxiety that comes with enrolling in college for so many students. They become the "touch stone" for them on campus, helping them navigate the entire process from application to job placement upon graduation and everything that happens in between. The

current funding for this position runs out on June 30, 2025 and will be a significant loss for our regional Adult Education programs, NMCC and all the current and potential students that have come to rely on this position's existence.

2. Full Funding for Adult Education Subsidy

The second component of this bill is of equal importance and deserves serious consideration. For more than a decade, the state has calculated the adult education subsidy based on an expenditure model that aligns with current law. And yet, year after year, programs receive only half—or in many cases, less—of the amount that is due to them. For example in FY24 my program, MSAD 1, had a full subsidy calculation of \$132,858.05, but we only received \$63,064, most recently for this current year, FY25 the full subsidy calculation is \$136,202.99, but we only received \$80,954.97. This persistent underfunding happens not because of changes in need or formula, but because the state does not allocate enough funds to meet its own obligations.

The lack of appropriate funding hits programs hard and requires us to rely on local funding to bridge the gaps as best as we can. We are forced to hire part-time staff when we can, or overwork the full-time salaried staff that we have. We are limited on hours of availability due to being understaffed for the amount of students that we serve. We want to do more, but the lack of funding prevents us from growing our programs and better serving our communities.

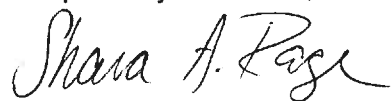
It is time for Maine to come good on the full funding that the law prescribes so we can do the jobs we are asked to do.

In closing, LD 1705 addresses two of the most important gaps in Maine's adult education landscape. It is a forward-thinking, cost-effective way to strengthen our workforce, support families, and ensure that all Maine adults have the opportunity to succeed.

On behalf of Hub2 Adult Education, all of our educational and workforce partners and MAEA, I urge you to support this bill and provide the funding and support that our learners and programs need to thrive.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to adult education.

Respectfully submitted,



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