



Statement for the EDU Committee

In support of LD 1740 Testimony

**“An Act to Establish the Maine Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics
Matching Grant Program”**

May 5, 2025

Submitted by: Ruth Kermish-Allen, Ph.D.

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Dear Chairs Rafferty and Murphy and Honorable Members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Dr. Ruth Kermish-Allen and I serve as the Executive Director of the Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance (MMSA), a non-profit committed to advancing equitable access to STEM education for all PreK-12 students. We accomplish this vision by providing research-based professional learning strategies for educators. I also have served as a Commissioner on the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, and I live in Appleton with my two teenage daughters. I have also served on the Governor’s AI Taskforce as well as the Governor’s taskforce on offshore wind energy. I am here today to stand in strong support of LD1740, which if enacted, will empower many of our state’s young people with the resources to find that spark of innovation and learning that often lead to career aspirations in STEM.

As you know the Maine State Science Fair is one of the premier STEM competitions for middle and high school in the state. But we are only one of the many opportunities that inspired fantastic educators have made possible for our next generation of innovators! I myself first learned of what I was capable of when I participated in my middle school’s Invention Competition. My best friend and I invented heated windshield wipers back in the late 80s. We built a working model, designed business plans, and presented our invention at competitions across the state, winning 2nd place! This experience helped me see that when I put my mind and intention to an idea, put in the hard work, thinking, problem solving, and time anything is possible. And I hope every young person has this opportunity to build confidence.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill. I urge you to please vote yes on this bill and during work session perhaps consider combining this bill with 823 to created a powerful opportunity for Maine's youth. We are all asking for a minimal investment with the potential for exponentially greater outcomes for our young people, our STEM workforce, and our ability to recruit and retain the talent we need to meet our goals as a state.

- **Ruth Kermish-Allen, PhD.**