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LD 1957

Dear Senator Grohoski and Representative Cloutier, and members of the committee, thank you for hearing my testimony to day in support of LD1957. I am Sean Mewshaw, a director and producer in Portland.

To begin my career in film production twenty five years ago, there was only one place to go to work in the industry, Los Angeles. So I moved west to movie mecca, where I was lucky enough to work my way up through entry level jobs on film sets filled with the masters of their craft. I don't just mean the once in a lifetime chances for a front row seat watching Jack Nicholson and Diane Keaton bring a scene to life together, Denzel Washington argue for the soul of his character, or Martin Scorsese shape the performance of Daniel Day Lewis, but I also mean getting the chance to spend months watching and asking anything I wanted to learn from the legions of skilled craftspeople working as camera operators and sound recordists, and electricians and grips and set decorators and costumers who were overflowing with practical knowledge and insight about the skills that are brought to bear to create the cinematic dreams we all love to experience. The term "movie magic" is very apt. We create amazement using ever so many tricks of the trade and bespoke talents which are best learned when passed down from master to apprentice.

I got that opportunity decades ago because I was lucky enough to have the resources to be able to live in Los Angeles. But the great news for the next generation who have ambitions to learn how movies are made, is that the filmmaking industry has been atomized and distributed across the country by the proliferation of film production incentives. Media production, content creation, these are modern career trajectories that invigorate younger generations. And our neighboring states have done what it takes to create those opportunities at home. They have opened their doors wide for film production, welcoming into their communities the chance for local residents to get direct experiences of this invigorating creative endeavor.

When I ask you to enthusiastically support the expansion of media production incentives in Maine to level the playing field with our New England neighbors, I do so not merely to increase my personal opportunities to make films here and share Maine-grown stories with the world, like my wife and collaborator Desi Van Til have been striving to do for years, but because I want to give so many of the hardworking creative people I know and cherish in our local community the same sort of crucial experiences that I got to have on major motion pictures. Right in their own backyards. Thank you.