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Whiting
LD 2014

To the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

I am writing as a Maine taxpayer in support of LD 2014, An Act to Update the Funding Method for Career and Technical Education Programs.

Maine has a workforce problem that cannot be solved by sending every student to a four-year college. We need electricians, welders, healthcare workers, mechanics, builders, and technicians. Career and Technical Education programs are the pipeline for those jobs, yet the way we fund them is outdated and does not reflect today's costs, enrollment, or workforce demand.

As a taxpayer, I want my dollars invested where they actually produce results. CTE programs give students practical skills that lead directly to good-paying jobs in Maine. They also keep young people engaged in school who might otherwise drop out or leave the state.

Right now, districts that try to expand or improve their CTE offerings are often penalized by funding formulas that do not keep up with inflation, equipment costs, or the need for modern training facilities. That discourages growth at exactly the time Maine needs more skilled workers.

Updating the funding method will help ensure these programs are stable, accessible, and aligned with real labor market needs. That is a smart use of public money and a smart investment in Maine's future workforce.

LD 2014 supports students, employers, and taxpayers at the same time. I urge the committee to support this bill.

Thank you for considering my testimony.