

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

L.D. 2014

AN ACT TO UPDATE THE FUNDING METHOD FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, I am Eric Waddell, Executive Director for Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association in strong support of L.D. 2014. Our associations represent more than 1,500 school board members and more than 250 superintendents and assistant superintendents, and we advocate on behalf of strong, equitable, and sustainable public education systems across our state.

Interest in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming among Maine students is growing rapidly. Across the state, students increasingly recognize the relevance and value of a CTE education, not only as preparation for immediate entry into the workforce, but also as a pathway to further postsecondary education, industry credentials, and long-term career success.

Today's students are also more aware than ever of the growing college debt crisis in the United States. They are becoming increasingly savvy about the long-term financial implications of postsecondary choices and are weighing return on investment more carefully than previous generations. As a result, many students see technical education as a high-value option that offers practical skills, meaningful credentials, and strong earning potential without the burden of crushing debt.

The challenge facing Maine's CTE centers, however, is not a lack of student interest—it is capacity. In many regions of the state, there are far more prospective students than there are available seats in CTE programs. This reality limits access to high-quality programming and constrains our ability to respond to workforce needs across Maine's economy.

L.D. 2014 offers a practical and sensible strategy to help address this challenge. By moving from a three-year to a two-year enrollment average for the purposes of calculating funding, this legislation provides a more responsive and realistic reflection of actual student demand.

Importantly, it also helps get funding to CTE centers more quickly, allowing them to plan, staff, and expand programs in a more timely and effective manner.

This change will better align funding with enrollment trends, support program growth, and ultimately allow more Maine students to access the CTE opportunities they are actively seeking.

For these reasons, our local school leaders strongly support L.D. 2014. Thank you for your continued commitment to Maine's students and public education system.