

***LD-2212, "An Act Making Unified Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds, and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027"***

(2-20-2026)

Good morning Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine and respective members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and respective members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Kevin Lavoie, I am a resident of St. David, Maine and the Director of the St. John Valley Technology Center in Frenchville. I am testifying today on behalf of the Maine Administrators of Career and Technical Education (MACTE), where I serve in a volunteer capacity as Vice President of the Board of Directors.

I come before you today to support the LD-2212 and seek to have LD 1764 "Ratio Bill" to be considered under the State's budget. LD 1764 seeks to assist the small CTE centers within geographic areas of the state that have diminished populations. Current maximum subsidy afforded to CTE programs require a 13:1 ratio on a 3-year rolling average for the said program(s) to receive threshold level funding. Should you not be able to fulfil this enrollment average funding for Instructor salary and benefits is reimbursed at ½ the threshold value. That is currently a \$38,075 decrease in program funding multiply that by the number of programs that fall in this same predicament and it equates to the following:

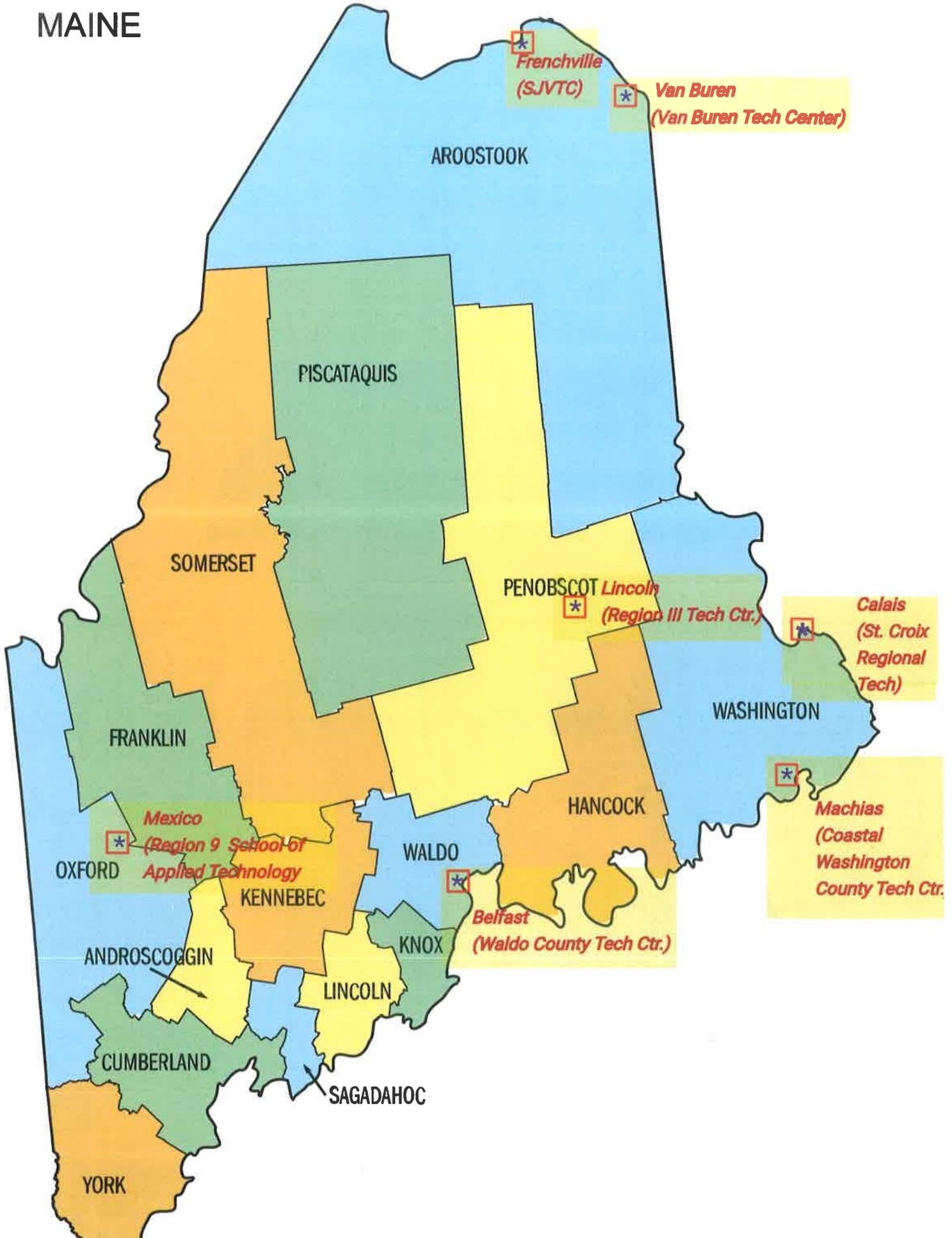
The seven (7) current institutions that fall in this category are (St. John Valley Tech Center in Frenchville, Van Buren Regional Tech Center in Van Buren, Region III Tech Center in Lincoln, St. Croix Regional Tech Center in Calais, Coastal Washington County Tech in Machias, Waldo County Tech Center in Belfast, and Region 9 School of Applied Technology in Mexico, Maine) 31 programs across these seven centers/regions are affected to the tune of \$1.2M - \$1.3M.

The current lack of equity requires change and we propose the passage of LD 1764 within the State Budget be ratified to provide CTE Centers/Regions with catchment areas less than 1,000 eligible students with an enrollment ratio of 8:1 rather than the current 13:1 ratio as established in statute. This will provide viability of small CTE centers to continue to provide much needed skills training to secondary students of the rural parts of Maine and strengthen workforce development and business stakeholder collaborations within these trades of study.

Should LD 1764 not pass and be included within the State Budget we surely will see programs be forced to be cut or be fully removed; therefore, more greatly affecting what we have been attempting to preserve is the education and training of a strong workforce within the State of Maine.

I thank you for your time and consideration in this vitally important matter for the youth of our state.

# MAINE



**LD 1764 ~ "Ratio Bill" Subsidy Loss Analysis**

**FY26 CTE Subsidy Impact - Small & Rural Maine Centers**  
*Programs below 13-Student 3-year Avg. Threshold*

<b>CTE Center</b>	<b>Region / Context</b>	<b>Programs Below 13 (3-Yr Avg)</b>	<b>Avg Enrollment Range</b>	<b># Programs</b>	<b>FY26 Subsidy Loss</b>	<b>Worst-Case Exposure</b>
<b>Region III Tech – Lincoln</b>	Rural / Aroostook	ECE (12), Law Enforcement (6), Firefighting (4), Business Mgmt (5)	4–12	4	<b>\$152,300</b>	<b>\$152,300</b>
<b>SJVTC – Frenchville</b>	Border / Economically Depressed	Forestry (5), Heavy Equip (5), Auto (8), Construction (9), ECE Ops (10)	5–10	5	<b>\$190,375</b>	<b>\$304,600</b>
<b>Waldo County Tech</b>	Rural / Midcoast	Small Engines (9), Diesel (9), Carpentry (8)	8–9	3	<b>\$114,225</b>	<b>\$152,300</b>
<b>St. Croix RTC – Calais</b>	Isolated / Washington County	Business, CNA, Computer Tech, Criminal Justice	~10	4	<b>\$152,300</b>	<b>\$152,300</b>
<b>Van Buren Tech Center</b>	Extreme Rural	Business Admin, Accounting, CNA/PSS, Applied Eng., Machining, HVAC, ECE	8–12	7	<b>\$266,525</b>	<b>\$266,525</b>
<b>Region 9 – Mexico</b>	Western Maine	Automation (7), Comp Repair (6), Machining (10), Const/Heavy Equip (12)	6–12	4	<b>\$152,300</b>	<b>\$152,300</b>
<b>Machias Tech Center</b>	Downeast / Coastal	Aquaculture, Building Trades, Computer Science, Criminal Justice	<13	4	<b>\$152,300</b>	<b>\$152,300</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	—	—	—	<b>31 Programs</b>	<b>\$1,180,325</b>	<b>\$1,332,825</b>

**Key Findings from the Data**

**1. Systemic Disadvantage to Small & Rural CTE Centers:**

- All affected centers serve economically depressed and population-declining regions
- Enrollment challenges are structural, not programmatic failures

**Programs align directly with regional workforce shortages, including:**

- ❖ Healthcare (CNA, Allied Health)
- ❖ Public Safety (Firefighting, Law Enforcement, Criminal Justice)
- ❖ Construction & Trades (HVAC, Carpentry, Heavy Equipment, Diesel)
- ❖ Early Childhood Education (critical statewide shortage)

**2. Enrollment Fragility Demonstrates the Need for Reform**

- One skewed enrollment year can collapse funding for multiple years
- Small catchment areas cannot absorb normal demographic fluctuations
- Current policy penalizes volatility, not inefficiency

**3. 13:1 Ratio Is Antiquated and Misaligned with Modern Maine**

**Developed during:**

- ❖ Larger family sizes
- ❖ More evenly distributed population

**Maine today faces:**

- ❖ Rural depopulation
- ❖ Aging population
- ❖ Smaller graduating cohorts

**The policy no longer reflects demographic reality**

**Why is 8 the correct enrollment floor:**

	<b>13:1 Model</b>	<b>8:1 Model</b>
➤ Reflects rural population density	✗	✓
➤ Supports workforce-critical programs	✗	✓
➤ Prevents program closures	✗	✓
➤ Maintains instructor viability (full-time)	✗	✓
➤ Ensures equity across regions	✗	✓

### **Cost Efficiency**

- Facilities, equipment, instructors, and safety compliance costs do not scale down proportionally
- Fixed costs remain constant whether enrollment is 8 or 13
- Loss of subsidy forces half-time programs, which:
  - Undermine recruitment and retention of qualified instructors
  - Destabilize program continuity
  - Reduce student access and completion

### **Educational & Workforce Equity Argument**

#### **Lowering the threshold to 8 students:**

- Preserves statewide access to high-quality CTE
- Protects local workforce pipelines
- Prevents regional skill deserts
- Ensures students in rural Maine have the same opportunity as those in urban centers
- Supports business and municipal stakeholders who rely on these graduates

***These programs are not low-value — they are low-volume by geography, not by demand.***

## **Policy Conclusion for LD 1764**

LD 1764 provides a targeted, data-supported correction to a funding mechanism that unintentionally harms rural Maine.

- **The proposed change:**
  - ★ Does not expand entitlement
  - ★ Does not reduce accountability
  - ★ Does stabilize essential programs
- **An 8:1 ratio restores fiscal neutrality and program viability for:**
  - ★ 7+ affected CTE regions
  - ★ 30+ high-demand workforce programs
  - ★ Hundreds of students annually

### **Bottom Line:**

Adjusting the enrollment ratio to 8 students is the minimum action required to ensure rural CTE centers remain fiscally whole, educationally sound, and economically vital to the State of Maine.

Kevin Lavoie  
Frenchville  
LD 2212

My Testimony is included within the attached file named:  
Testimony 2-20-26

AFA