

February 24, 2026

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

The United Technologies Center Steering Committee writes in support of the proposed amendments to Chapter 115 and to respectfully encourage the inclusion of Career and Technical Education (CTE) endorsement areas within the expanded portfolio pathway framework.

The members of the UTC Steering Committee work directly with newly hired CTE instructors each year as they navigate Maine's certification and recertification requirements. Our role is to mentor, guide, and support instructors as they transition from industry into education. We help them understand certification expectations, identify appropriate coursework, connect with professional development opportunities, and ensure they remain on track while managing the significant demands of teaching in highly technical programs.

CTE instructors often come to education after long and successful careers in business and industry. They hold professional licenses, industry-recognized credentials, and years of technical experience that align closely with Maine's workforce needs. While they bring exceptional content knowledge and practical skill, the certification system has not always reflected the pathway that brought them into the classroom.

In our mentoring work, we frequently see how rigid or duplicative requirements can create unnecessary obstacles for otherwise strong and committed educators. These barriers can slow progress toward certification and, in some cases, discourage individuals from entering or remaining in the profession. When CTE teaching positions are difficult to fill or instructors struggle to move through certification pathways that do not fully recognize their background, students ultimately feel the impact.

The proposed amendments to Chapter 115 represent meaningful progress. Updating certification language, reducing unnecessary duplication, and allowing greater flexibility within a system that still maintains state oversight are practical and responsible improvements.

The portfolio pathway aligns closely with the type of mentoring and structured support that Steering Committee members already provide. A pathway that acknowledges prior professional experience while pairing it with targeted mentorship and professional development would strengthen our ability to support new instructors. Extending this opportunity to CTE endorsement areas would:

- Support recruitment of qualified industry professionals
- Provide a structured framework for individualized development plans
- Maintain professional standards while recognizing prior experience
- Improve retention of new CTE instructors
- Promote greater stability in regional CTE programs

Including CTE within a state-approved portfolio process would complement, not replace, traditional preparation routes. It would provide an additional structured option that reflects the realities of technical education while preserving rigor and accountability.

The UTC Steering Committee supports advancement of the proposed Chapter 115 amendments and encourages thoughtful inclusion of CTE instructors within the expanded portfolio pathway as this work moves forward.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued commitment to Maine's students and educators.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca Willette', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rebecca Willette – Co-Chair
United Technologies Center Steering Committee
Bangor, Maine