

February 24, 2026

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

I am writing in strong 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 reflected in these updates.

As the Director of a regional Career and Technical Education center serving multiple sending school districts, I work daily with the realities of Maine's educator workforce challenges, particularly in CTE programs. While the proposed changes modernize and strengthen certification flexibility in important ways, it is critical that CTE instructors are fully included in these efforts.

CTE educators often enter the classroom after extensive careers in industry. They bring professional licensure, industry-recognized credentials, supervisory experience, and deep technical expertise directly aligned to Maine's workforce needs. In many cases, these individuals have decades of practical experience that cannot be replicated through traditional university coursework alone.

Despite this, certification structures have not always reflected the unique pathway into teaching that CTE instructors follow. As a result, high-quality candidates can face barriers that delay or discourage their transition into education. In CTE, these delays have real consequences. When we are unable to fill technical teaching positions, programs are suspended or closed, and students lose access to career pathways that lead directly to employment in high-demand fields across our state.

Maine continues to experience educator shortages across multiple endorsement areas, and CTE programs often experience some of the most acute staffing challenges. The proposed amendments to Chapter 115 represent a responsible and forward-thinking step. Modernizing certification language, streamlining duplicative requirements, and allowing greater flexibility within a framework of state oversight and accountability are necessary policy adjustments. These changes do not reduce rigor. Rather, they better align certification pathways with demonstrated competency, meaningful professional experience, and the needs of Maine students.

The portfolio pathway model recognizes that meaningful professional experience, when combined with structured mentorship and targeted support, can serve as a rigorous and accountable route to certification. Extending that opportunity to include CTE endorsement areas would:

- Improve recruitment in CTE technical programs
- Recognize and value prior industry experience
- Provide structured oversight while maintaining professional standards
- Support retention of skilled professionals already serving Maine students
- Strengthen program stability in workforce-aligned pathways

Including CTE within a state-approved portfolio process would not diminish standards. Instead, it would create a structured and accountable pathway that reflects the professional realities of CTE instructors while preserving quality and oversight.

I strongly support advancement of the proposed Chapter 115 amendments and respectfully urge the Committee to ensure that Career and Technical Education instructors are fully eligible to participate in the expanded portfolio pathway as this legislation moves forward.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and continued commitment to Maine students, schools, and workforce development.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Amanda Peterson".

Amanda Peterson
Director
United Technologies Center
Bangor, Maine

Amanda Peterson
Region 4 - United Technologies Center
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Please see my attached letter for full testimony.

As Director of Region 4 - United Technologies Center, I support the proposed amendments to Chapter 115 and respectfully encourage inclusion of Career and Technical Education endorsement areas within the expanded portfolio pathway. These updates modernize certification while maintaining rigor and will better support recruitment, retention, and program stability in CTE programs across Maine.