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Testimony of Representative Michael Brennan Introducing
LD 1367, An Act Regarding the Funding Formula for Adult Education
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Good afternoon, Senator Rafferty and fellow distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. My name is Michael Brennan, and I represent House District 115, which includes a portion of Portland. I am here to introduce **LD 1367, An Act Regarding the Funding Formula for Adult Education.**

LD 1367 proposes an increase in state funding for adult education programs, to begin to move in the direction of fully funding adult education. In addition, the bill directs the Department of Education to establish a working group or hire an outside agency to analyze the State's adult education system and reimbursement formula to ensure the formula is fair and meets the needs of adult education programs across Maine.

Maine adult education is a public education and career pathways system that enables adults to be prepared for post-secondary education and/or employment. Over 70 adult education programs throughout Maine provide a range of instructional services to help adults develop the skills needed for further educational opportunities, job training and better employment.

Adults seeking to continue their education or advance their career can enroll in adult education courses in literacy and adult basic education, high school completion, English language acquisition, Maine College Transitions, career preparation and workforce credentialing and enrichment.

Adult education is a tremendous asset to the State's educational system and a crucial part of meeting our workforce needs. However, the entire State share of adult education, for all 70 programs across the State, is just \$5.2 million per year.

The funding formula for adult education is separate from that for the K-12 system. Many local towns contribute to adult education, but that contribution is voluntary. This leaves us with a patchwork of adult education programs, with some towns boasting robust programs that benefit

from significant local and State funding, while other programs struggle with resources and capacity.

In order to fully fund adult education using the current funding formula, the State would need to double the current baseline appropriation of \$5.2 million, then increase that amount each year to account for inflation. However, recognizing that would be a big lift, and also that the current funding formula may need improvement, LD 1367 proposes a modest appropriation that would move us closer to full State funding, while also creating a process for the State to examine the formula to determine whether it meets the needs of our adult education programs and learners.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this legislation.