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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

L.D. 1942

AN ACT TO ENSURE EQUITY IN CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION STAFFING SUPPORT RATIOS ACROSS VARIED REGIONS OF THE STATE

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Steven Bailey, executive director of Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association, in support of L.D. 1942.

School Boards and superintendents support this bill because it allows for reasonable staffing ratios for Career and Technical Education classes in smaller CTE Regions and Centers to assure more students will have access to programs that lead to meaningful career paths. We need those students to stay in Maine and help fill job vacancies that will increase as people retire.

Those retirements already are having an effect and Maine needs to continue work to support the development of replacement workers with 21st century skills.

A report commissioned by the Maine Connectivity Authority said the state is expecting to have a shortfall of 3,240 workers in broadband jobs.

We also face a shortage in the health care industry at the same time our population is aging into retirement. Maine has one of the highest percentages in the country of people older than 50 and one of the lowest percentages of those between 18 to 49.

Career and Technical Education prepares our students to find meaningful work after graduation in fields that support Maine residents and provide good paying jobs for these students. We need to support our CTE teachers and schools.

The proposed student to teacher norm for CTE is 13-to-1 in larger CTE catchment areas and 8-to-1 in smaller catchment areas (under 1,000 students). As it stands now, if schools are only getting an allocation for half a staff member for student counts less than 13, they will have an increasingly difficult time finding instructors who need full-time work. As a result, programs will not continue, students will not be able to enroll in these classes, and the desired workers will not be produced.

MSSA and MSBA urge you to vote OTP on L.D. 1942.