



Troy D. Jackson
President of the Senate

THE MAINE SENATE
131st Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony in Support of LD 1942

***An Act to Ensure Equity in Career and Technical Education Staffing Support Ratios
Across Varied Regions of the State***

Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Wednesday, May 24, 2023

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Troy Jackson. I serve as President of the Maine Senate and proudly represent Aroostook County in the Legislature. I am here today to support LD 1942, *An Act to Ensure Equity in Career and Technical Education Staffing Support Ratios Across Varied Regions of the State*.

I would like to start my testimony by clearly admitting that I am not an expert on the Essential Programs and Services (EPS) funding formula. I do know the intent behind it is to ensure that all students have an equitable opportunity and it is based on student needs. The Career and Technical Education (CTE) cost model is a subset of the EPS formula and relies on data for enrollment, staffing, facilities, and expenditures. LD 1942 deals specifically with the student-to-staffing ratio.

My understanding is that the current EPS formula restricts CTE programs to a ratio of 13 students to one full-time instructor. This means that smaller, rural CTE centers who have fewer students in their enrollment areas are at a disadvantage. To make matters worse, if a school needs to reduce staffing because of this restriction, it is especially hard to fill part-time positions. This in turn decreases the likelihood of keeping these programs active. Meaning fewer opportunities for kids.

LD 1942 is an attempt to fix this situation and improve opportunities for students. It takes into consideration smaller districts, with fewer students. Students who deserve CTE programs and services. The bill simply requires the Department of Education to adopt routine technical rules that would differentiate and make the staff-to-student ratios between schools with less than 1,000 students more equitable. It would take into consideration variables that are outside the students, staff, and districts control.

Therefore, I ask you to please join me in supporting the needs of all students regardless of the size of the school's population. These kids deserve the opportunity to learn, grow, and become proficient in the courses offered through CTE programming. They are our future and they need your help to make this a reality.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will attempt to answer any questions you may have.