

**Testimony of Christopher Quint, State Workforce Board, Maine Department of Labor
In Support LD 87, An Act Regarding the State Workforce Board**

Joint Standing Committee on Labor

Public Hearing, LD 87 - An Act Regarding the State Workforce Board

March 4, 2025

Greetings, Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor. My name is Chris Quint, Director of the State Workforce Board (the Board).

The State Workforce Board is an employer-led board established to advise the Governor on workforce policy and the development of workforce development programs and initiatives across Maine to help Maine people and businesses compete successfully in the global economy.

The role of the Board is to:

- perform “all of the duties and responsibilities of the state board as defined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act” (Title 26, §2006, subsection 1(A));
- enhance the capacity and performance of Maine's workforce development system;
- align and improve the outcomes and effectiveness of workforce programs and investments,
- promote economic growth; and
- engage businesses, workers, education providers, economic development, labor representatives and other stakeholders to achieve Maine's strategic and operational workforce vision and goals.

The Board is pleased to put forward LD 87, An Act Regarding the State Workforce Board, to address technical changes to statute, provide flexibility for the Board to meet its goals, and ensure the Board is in compliance with USDOL audits. We appreciate, and thank, Representative Roeder, who is a member of the State Workforce Board, for sponsoring this legislation.

LD 87 makes four technical changes.

First, the bill changes the name of the Board from the “State Workforce Board” to the “State Workforce Development Board” to align with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) naming convention of State Workforce Development Boards. WIOA is the federal authorizing legislation for State Workforce Development Boards. This change will be reflected in every mention of the Board throughout statute.

Second, the bill aligns the submission of the Board’s annual report with the committee of authority, which is now the Committee on Labor.

Third, LD 87 would change the type of rulemaking used to develop rules for the Maine Industry Partnership Program from Major Substantive to Routine Technical. The Board has recently stood up the Maine Industry Partnership Program, originally established by the Legislature in 2013, and the type of rules this program anticipates are those that fall under the Routine Technical definition 5 MRS §8071 (2) (A), specifically rules that “establish standards of practice or procedure for the conduct of business...”.

Finally, LD 87 would remove the requirement that certain Board members must go through the confirmation process. The confirmation process was originally the result of PL 2019 Chapter 246, which added confirmation authority for those Board membership who represent Maine businesses and representatives of the workforce. These members are required under WIOA, which gives authority to the Governor to appoint these, and other, members to the State Workforce Development Board.

During the past five years, the confirmation process has led to challenges making timely appointments to the Board, creating issues where the Board is without the full complement of members for several consecutive meetings. During a 2023 audit by USDOL, the Board was found to be out of compliance with WIOA and received a finding due to a lack of confirmed business members on the board.

Seats on the Board expire during the month of August and members are not required to stay until their successor is appointed. This means that there can be at least two Board meetings, and potentially up to three, where new members will not be present, and the Board would be operating out of compliance with federal regulations.

We reached out to the National Governors Association (NGA) to find out if other states have similar confirmation requirements. The NGA found that there are ten other states that have similar requirements to Maine. Rhode Island is the only other New England state with a process similar to Maine, requiring business and workforce representative members to be “appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate.”¹

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have now or at a future work session. Thank you for your time.

¹ RI Gen L § 42-102-2.