

## **RE: LD 1627 – An Act Regarding Workforce Development, Education Reform, and Talent Retention**

April 23, 2025

Greetings Sen. Rafferty, Rep. Murphy, and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

I was recently made aware of **LD 1627** and its consideration by your committee.

I read the bill and understood its intent and agree such legislation will have value.

I'm a life long Mainer. I went to State schools, found gainful employment in Maine, and have by most standards, earned and prepared for a comfortable retirement. In my experience, I benefited from a guidance counselor suggesting higher education. Choosing a specific course of study however, was little better than a "shot in the dark", as it was based on my perception of what type of work I would be prepared for and very little exposure or practical experience.

I completed a 2 yr program at a very modest cost, debt free, while working at a grocery store. I was recruited by a local manufacturer before graduation and accepted a position. By the time I graduated, I knew the type of work I'd studied for wasn't a good long term fit, and enrolled in another course of study in the Fall following graduation. I stayed with the company that recruited me because it had a tuition reimbursement program for employees. I leveraged that benefit and graduated debt free and enjoyed a career that lasted 36 years.

I tell the prior story because:

- had I more experience and exposure to various types of work I might have made a better choice upfront - LD 1627 describes introducing a little more rigor in choosing a course of study;
- the company I worked for, that reimbursed my tuition, received a tax credit (albeit Federal level) and allowed me to graduate debt free - "a win/win" - LD 1627 has provisions that can make my experience available to others;
- I was able to stay in Maine, pay taxes, and live relatively comfortably - LD 1627 could be good for Maine business, or businesses that might set up shop in Maine with a happier workforce (doing work best fits them);

Thanks for reading and considering adoption of LD 1627.

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