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Maine State Legislature

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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE  
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON  
EDUCATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

-- IN SUPPORT --

LD 1163 (HP 768) AN ACT TO FOSTER CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN MAINE  
SCHOOLS BY CREATING AN ADDITIONAL PATHWAY TO CERTIFY INDUSTRIAL ARTS  
TEACHERS

April 25, 2025

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Madam Chairwoman, and honorable colleagues.

I am grateful for the opportunity to testify before you in support L.D. 1163, *An Act to Foster Career and Technical Education in Maine Schools by Creating an Additional Pathway to Certify Industrial Arts Teachers*.

I want to commence my testimony by thanking numerous members of this committee, the President of the Senate, and Commissioner Makin for giving this legislation strong bipartisan support.

The committee may recall a similar effort I led during the previous legislature which resulted in the Legislature directing the Department of Education to study the credentialing process more broadly. The Department complied and completed the study last year. Nevertheless, I want to report that the aggressive deterioration of Maine's industrial arts programming has not been ameliorated, and indeed, if the Legislature fails to act, I worry it may become extinct in as soon as a decade.

Even though there's no shortage of Mainers with the expertise and interest in teaching industrial arts, it's impossible for them to enter the teaching profession because the courses

required to obtain that certification aren't offered at any Maine college or university – and they haven't been in nearly 20 years.

Indeed, the opponents to this legislation are correct in saying that a review of Chapter 115 is underway. In fact, that review has been in process for years, and there's no guarantee that the Board will provide the necessary flexibility to rescue the industrial arts programs now on the chopping block. There's also no guarantee the Board will modernize the outdated section 700 course requirements which the Legislature directed it to do more than 6 years ago through LD 1369 adopted by the 129th Legislature.

Meanwhile, while we're waiting for these important reforms, industrial arts programs are closing down for good, and students are missing out on the skills we need in today's economy.

So, I propose a very narrow alternative pathway specifically targeting experienced professionals in the trades who, although they have a degree, do not qualify for the 700 credential. In order to qualify for the alternative pathway the teacher must have "completed an apprenticeship program; completed a 2-year degree or certificate from a technical institution; completed a minimum number of hours of paid applied employment or teaching in the component area for which the endorsement is sought; and completed a minimum number of hours of experience learning the trade or craft for which the endorsement is sought."

After consulting with colleagues on the committee and the Department, I've endorsed an amendment proposing to further require the successful completion of a methods and teaching course to ensure the effective delivery of content to students, and the text of that amendment will be made available to the committee in the near future.

I believe that industrial arts programming is essential to the economy and pedagogical vitality of the State of Maine. I support this narrow approach to remedy their imminent closure, and I urge the committee to do so likewise.

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