

Mail body:

Goodmorning Chairman Rafferty, Chairwoman Murphy, and the Committee of Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Luca Penney, I live in Manchester. I am a Sophomore at Maine Arts Academy, the only free charter school for the arts in Maine. I am speaking today in opposition of LD 1571. There are multiple arts teachers that do not have a degree in teaching but a degree in the art that they teach, like my illustrations teacher Mr. Cox. He's the best teacher I have ever had. Since my freshman year, He has constantly pushed me to be the best artist I could be. I never believed I could be an artist as a profession but since I have met him that has changed and this is a general consensus among his students. I'm sure you're aware many teenagers are going through emotional struggles and don't always have a good support system at home. Having teachers that are empathetic and encouraging and push them to be better are a necessity to my peers and I. In the last two years I have been able to participate in nature photography, film, illustration, introduction to visual arts, and introduction to visual arts studio. The process of visual arts studio has given students the chance to create art and sell in a professional setting to different shops and to showcase in art galleries. As an avid reader, being able to illustrate and put what I see in my head when I read onto paper is a magical experience. This is not an opportunity I would have gotten outside of Maine Arts Academy. The fact that this bill is even considered truly frustrates me, what better way to teach students than through the lived experiences that one has had? Have you ever cooked with your parents or your grandparents and there's no recipe, they're just showing you what they do and telling you that you'll know when it's right? You may not know it right away but with growth and experience it will come. That is what experts in their field, such as Mr. Cox are doing. They're giving us the recipe to success and allowing us to take their foundation and make it our own.

Legislation like this opens the door for future changes that could impact registered apprenticeships, trade schools, and other skilled jobs from being taught by people that are experts in their field. This is a dangerous path to be heading down, this small change that you are considering today, if moved forward could be detrimental to the future education to people all over the state of Maine from all walks of life. It truly saddens me that people that are so talented and willing to share their knowledge could have that opportunity taken away.