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May 6, 2025

Testimony In Support of

**LD 1764 – An Act to Ensure Equitable Staffing Ratios Across the State for Career and Technical Education Programs in Areas with Smaller Student Populations**

Good Afternoon, Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Representative Tiffany Strout from Harrington, representing the towns of Milbridge, Harrington, Columbia, Columbia Falls, Centerville, Addison, Jonesport, Beals, Jonesboro, Roque Bluffs, Whitneyville and Machias in beautiful Washington County and I am here today to testify in support of LD 1764 – **An Act to Ensure Equitable Staffing Ratios Across the State for Career and Technical Education Programs in Areas with Smaller Student Populations.**

Technical Trade schools are being viewed as a necessity for the future of our communities and our country. Everything we rely on in our everyday life is part of learning a trade. Skilled trades are involved with our food being delivered by truck drivers, the electricians who keep the lights and heat on, the plumbers who make sure we have running water, the nurses taking care of our health and the law enforcement officers keeping us safe.

Allowing students to begin learning the trade jobs in high school is changing lives for many, especially in western Washington County. Coastal Washington County Institute of Technology has given students a head start when choosing to go to college and maybe more importantly the school is giving students who may not fit well in a traditional classroom or decide college is not for them, some basic skills to help them pursue their future career.

Currently the state reimburses technical trade high school for teachers when the student population for the class is at a minimum of 12 students. This reimbursement is greatly appreciated and does help with what can be offered for programs at the school. However, with the number of students in rural areas, it is often difficult to fill every class with a minimum of 12 students. Also, with offering like our CDL course, with 1 teacher and 1 truck, it is very difficult to get all the required driving hours and maintenance checks completed in a school year for them to get their CDL State License. Having 8 students enrolled in this program helps to ensure completion of the course in 1 school year, allowing students to then take another trade option the other year.

This bill also provides the opportunity for more course offerings in rural areas. With populations shrinking, there are only so many students to offer the programs too. But there may be students who would excel if more programs were able to be offered.

The opportunity to give students hands-on trade experience helps keep students in school, helps keep students involved in their community, helps to keep them away from drugs, and offers them an opportunity for success in their futures and also helps them to be contributing members of society.

Thank you for your time today and I would be glad to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tiffany Strout".

Tiffany Strout  
State Representative

District 11 Addison, Beals, Columbia, Columbia Falls, Harrington, Jonesboro, Jonesport, Machias, Milbridge, Roque Bluffs, Whitneyville, Centerville Township, and North Washington (Part)