

Maine Education Association

Jesse Hargrove President | Beth French Vice President | Jaye Rich Treasurer
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Testimony

In Support Of

*LD 2099, An Act to Amend Certain Eligibility Requirements for Secondary Students
Receiving State Subsidies for Postsecondary Courses*

Jan Kosinski, Government Relations Director, Maine Education Association

Before the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee

January 28, 2026

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

My name is Jan Kosinski, and I serve as the Director of Government Relations for the Maine Education Association. The MEA represents nearly 24,000 educators across the state, including teachers and education support professionals in almost every public school district, faculty and staff in the University of Maine and Maine Community College systems, and thousands of retired educators.

I am here today to offer testimony on behalf of the MEA neither for nor against LD 2099, *An Act to Amend Certain Eligibility Requirements for Secondary Students Receiving State Subsidies for Postsecondary Courses*.

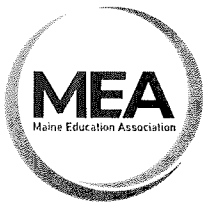
The MEA strongly supports Maine's early college programs. We have heard directly from educators and students that these programs have clear and lasting positive impacts. Early college opportunities raise student aspirations, expose students to the rigor of college-level coursework, and—perhaps most importantly—build the confidence many students need to believe that postsecondary education is within reach. As with the testimony you heard last week regarding Upward Bound/TRIO programs, early college programs are proven, positive influences that encourage students to pursue education beyond high school.

When students successfully complete early college courses, they earn college credit. This allows many students to complete an undergraduate degree more quickly and reduces their reliance on student loans. In short, early college programs benefit students, families, and the state alike. This is a true win-win.

We also hear from teachers that early college courses provide meaningful professional development opportunities. Educators teaching these courses often collaborate directly with university faculty on curriculum development, syllabi, assessments, and academic standards. This strengthens alignment between secondary and postsecondary education and elevates instructional quality. Again, a win-win.

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For these reasons, the MEA opposes provisions in LD 2099 that would cap the number of credits students may earn while enrolled in high school. Such limits arbitrarily restrict student opportunity and impede academic progress. We should encourage students to participate in as many early college courses as they are willing and able to take—not placing artificial ceilings on their potential.

We recognize that last year the University of Maine System and the Department of Education agreed to an 18-credit cap after the \$5.5 million annual appropriation became insufficient to meet program demand.¹ But this moment should be seen as a success, not a problem. Increased participation demonstrates the value of early college programs to students and families across Maine. The appropriate response is to strengthen and stabilize program funding, not to limit student access.

Some may argue that the state is subsidizing courses for students or families who could afford to pay on their own. While we understand that concern, we believe the benefits of universal access far outweigh the costs. Maine has already made a policy decision to provide free meals to all students, regardless of income, because we recognize that universal programs remove stigma, simplify administration, and support student success. Early college programs deserve to be viewed through the same lens. If we can provide food for all students, we can provide equitable access to early college opportunities for all students, even with those with the ability to pay.

The MEA supports the amended version of LD 2099 that seeks to create a stable and sustainable funding structure for early college programs going forward. At the same time, we urge the Committee to reconsider the use of credit caps and instead increase the state appropriation for the program to match current and future need. If the Committee determines that caps are necessary, we respectfully ask that they be applied consistently and set at no fewer than 24 credits for both CTE and non-CTE students.

Thank you for your time and your consideration and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

¹ Please see [Aspirations Program Credit Limit Update - University of Maine System](#)