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## **In Support of LD 680- An Act to Reestablish the Task Force To Study the Creation of a Comprehensive Career and Technical Education System**

March 16, 2021

For the distinguished Senator Mattie Daughtry, Representative Mike Brennan and the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee:

The Southern Midcoast Maine Chamber, representing businesses in Brunswick, Bath, Topsham, Harpswell and twelve additional Maine communities, proudly supports the passage of this emergency legislation to create a task force to study the creation of a comprehensive Career and Technical Education system. Beyond the importance of the concept itself, which we believe the business community as a whole overwhelmingly recognizes the importance of, we would like to stress our support for the emergency passage of this bill.

As stated in lines 7-9 of the bill itself, *“the study must be initiated before the 90-day period expires in order that the study may be completed and a report submitted in time for submission to the next legislative session.”* We are not merely approaching an emergency with available career and technical workers, but rather, we are already there. Finding tradespeople with available time to add more jobs to their schedules is increasingly difficult. Many contractors, plumbers, and other skilled tradespeople are booked weeks and months out.

With the influx of people moving to Maine, the retirement cliff of the Baby Boomers and the sheer amount of skilled laborers retiring from our workforce over the next decade, exploring the need for a four-year technical high school is critical for our State, and that work needs to begin without delay.

We would also like to recognize how proud our chamber of commerce is that our own Senator Mattie Daughtry, recognizes the importance of this bill and is the one to present it. This task force is a vital first step in taking our state’s career and technical education to the next level, and we fully support the Legislature in passing this bill as presented.

Submitted on behalf of the organization by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cory King".

Cory King, SMMC Executive Director