

State of Maine
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Testimony of Dwight Littlefield, Career and Technical Education State Director

In Support of L.D. 144

An Act To Fund Capital Improvements To Career And Technical Education Centers and Regions To Bolster Maine's Future Workforce

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Sponsored by: Speaker Ryan Fecteau

Date: March 17, 2021

Senator Daughtry, Representative Brennan, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Dwight Littlefield, State Director for Career and Technical Education, and I am here today representing the Department to support L.D. 144, An Act To Fund Capital Improvements to Career and Technical Education Centers and Regions To Bolster Maine's Future Workforce.

L.D. 144 will make bond funds available to support capital improvements to Career and Technical Education (CTE) centers and regions. This funding would allow additional targeted funding to go to the CTE centers and regions for capital improvements, as well as equipment upgrades.

Through the Department's current comprehensive school review process, the Department has collected information from instructors and directors that demonstrates a need for updating equipment to meet industry standards and better align with the community college system programming. The Department also conducts Methods of Administration reviews for all CTEs. During the process, the Department evaluates ADA compliance. We have found that many of the CTE directors have had to get creative to meet ADA requirements due to the age of their buildings.

The Department supports the intent of the bill and maintains a steadfast commitment to supporting Career and Technical Education statewide. More specifically, the Department of Education in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Community Development and Department of Labor have launched several career and workforce development initiatives. Additionally, the Mills administration has partnered with Maine's Community College System to train skilled workers to fill jobs in high-growth industries. We believe that further investing in CTE programming statewide will be one of the many steps needed to further strengthen Maine's economy now and into the future.

For these reasons, the Department of Education supports the intent of L.D. 144, An Act To Fund Capital Improvements to Career and Technical Education Centers and Regions To Bolster Maine's Future Workforce. I would be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have, and I will be available for work sessions on this bill.