



Testimony of Matt Marks in Support of LD 144

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

March 17, 2021 10:00 AM

Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Good Morning Senator Daughtry, Representative Brennan, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Matt Marks; I am a Scarborough resident representing the Associated General Contractors of Maine today.

AGC Maine supports increasing the investment in Maine's Career and Technical Education Centers. Maine's construction unemployment lingers around 30,000 craft workers. While still below the peak in 2009/2010 season, we are also one of the few states with growth despite the pandemic. We rank 5th for growth in the last year in the country, but the continued employment crisis and recruitment, education and on the job training needs will see pressure with a growing market.

Craft workers in commercial construction have the chance to join firms that provide competitive pay and benefits. In Maine, 4 out of the 5 most numerous construction occupations had higher median pay than the median for all employees in the state in 2019. Despite changes in the market, the need for additional craft workers will continue as workers retire. Connecting graduates of CTEs to Maine firms is vital pipeline to address future needs.

Project owners continue to voice concerns on the skilled worker shortage as they encounter longer project times and cost increases. Providing careers to recent high school graduates will build a generation of Mainers who have little to no post-secondary debt for education and jumpstart on the necessities of building a life here. Right now thirty-six states and the District of Columbia require districts/high schools to provide career and technical education programs- Maine is not one of those states. Creating CTE Centers that demonstrate connections to careers and skills requires a strong investment.

We urge support of this bill. Thank you, I am happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted by,

Matt Marks, AGC Maine