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*Testimony of Rep. Maggie O'Neil sponsoring*

### **LD 414, An Act To Create Parity between Private Schools and Public Schools Regarding Career and Technical Education Tuition Rates**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs*

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, I am Maggie O'Neil. I represent House District 15, which is in Saco. Thank you for the opportunity to come before you today to present **LD 414, An Act To Create Parity between Private Schools and Public Schools Regarding Career and Technical Education Tuition Rates**.

I submitted this bill on behalf of both Thornton Academy, which is a Town Academy in my hometown of Saco, and the Maine Association of Independent Schools, which includes 11 town academies among its membership.

LD 414 seeks to balance the playing fields between schools that accept publicly assisted students and receive a per-pupil tuition rate established annually by the Department of Education, and public schools funded under the EPS system. Despite the title, this bill would help both private schools (mostly town academies) and public schools that receive the state tuition rate from sending towns.

Currently, if a student at a Town Academy, like Thornton (or any school that accepts a publicly assisted student and receives the state tuition rate), chooses to access a course at a Career and Technical Educational Center (CTE), then the State cuts the tuition for that student by 1/3, despite the fact that that school still has to maintain the same amount of infrastructure, teachers, and other fixed costs.

The statutory provision requiring this reduction in tuition is in Title 20-A, section 5809. LD 414 would simply repeal this section of law.

This treatment is in direct contrast with how the State funds public schools. When providing the state subsidy to a public school, the State does not consider the number of students from a particular public school attending a CTE. As a result, there is no loss in state funding when a student from a public school attends a CTE program, unlike Town Academies and other schools that rely on the tuition rate.

Please support LD 414 and remove this disincentive to students attending CTEs, at a time when we want to encourage students to utilize our State's network of CTEs. Headmaster Rene Menard from Thornton Academy is here today to testify and available to answer questions.

Thank you.