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To: Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
From: Becky Smith, Director of Government and Community Relations
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Re: Testimony 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*

Senator Daughtry, Representative Brennan and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Becky Smith. I am the Director of Government and Community Relations for the Maine Community College System. I am here today to offer our strong support for LD 144, *An Act To Fund Capital Improvements to Career and Technical Education Centers and Regions To Bolster Maine's Future Workforce*. President Daigler would like to be here himself, but he had a prior commitment, so I am here in his stead.

As you know, the Maine Community Colleges work closely with our sister CTEs. They are an integral and often under-resourced aspect of Maine's educational infrastructure. Our dual enrollment offerings, those taught at CTEs that offer college credit, are meant to start our youth on a path to fulfilling careers.

The major hurdle we often face when trying to expand our offerings at CTEs is their outdated or insufficient equipment. For example, as we explored offering automotive and welding in Waldo County, we found that their equipment and space was not sufficient to offer college-level coursework. More importantly, if the CTE students are not training on adequate equipment they will not be prepared for college, jobs or apprenticeships they expect after graduation. This is not fair to the hard-working students, their capable teachers or, really, to Maine's future.

As I sought information for this testimony, one community college reported that they had pulled data on a particular CTE's students attending the college. The students were coming to the college as part of an agreement. The students met their course prerequisites at their CTE and

came to the college for further instruction. The college, however, found that the students were failing their second course. This tied back to insufficient or older equipment at the CTE.

I also received lists of CTEs who were in dire needs of equipment for machining, construction technology and automotive. CTEs across the state can't offer the programs their students want and that Maine businesses need.

We all want direct pathways from CTEs to the community colleges. We both have staff that work tirelessly to make this happen, but without adequate resources to train our students who want to enter the trades, healthcare, or other disciplines offered at both CTEs and Maine's community colleges, it cannot happen. This is particularly true when the accrediting body is external to the community colleges and has specific curricula that must be delivered and learning outcomes that have to be met in order to become certified.

You will hear a number of bills this session that seek to improve the educational quality at the CTEs. All the bills are seeking, in their own way, to address this statewide need. Some may pass, others likely will not. However, the fundamental issue is that Maine has underfunded and underappreciated technical education for too long.

This is why we hope this committee will offer your strong support for LD 144.

Thank you.