

Senator Daughtry, Representative Bennett, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. My name is Nancy Weed, and I served for four years as the Superintendent/Director of Region 10 Technical High School in Brunswick until I retired from that position in July. I am offering testimony on behalf of the students, staff, community members and our business and industry partners in support of LD 144, “An Act to Fund Capital Improvements to Career and Technical Centers and Regions to Bolster Maine’s Future Workforce”.

Region 10 Technical High School is over 35 years old. When I first interviewed for my position in 2016, the 21 steps leading up to the bridge to the main office were crumbling, the original roof was leaking, the oil boilers were original and designed for coal, the electrical system was frail, the air quality throughout the building in dire need of correcting, and a multitude of other building flaws and lack of investment into its maintenance clearly evident. A 2014 renovation study revealed the need for thirteen million dollars to address these issues. How can you ignore students working in shop areas where the temperature is 40 degrees or the 20’ x 20’ classrooms with 16 large students at 90 degrees, or worse yet, higher than normal particulates in your early child education shop area where four year olds attended three days per week, or absurdly high levels of particulates in your Auto Collision program? What are the health risks, the safety risks and the message to students who would like a career and technical education?

Career and Technical Education regions, such as Region 10, rely on money from their respective sending schools and state funding to address these issues. I cannot speak to how centers specifically receive their funding, but I know from colleagues it is no different. It is rare and time consuming for CTE regions to go directly to sending school district taxpayers to fund projects of any magnitude to address these major capital improvements to a building. Both regions and centers rely on funding to address issues that are not found in a typical school setting, but are found in the cavernous shop areas of CTEs who are using commercial equipment. Safety in such a setting is critical to both students, staff and everyone entering the building, and safety costs money to address the issues unique to a CTE.

Region 10 was fortunate under law to be able enter into an energy conservation performance contract and address the air quality issues. It cost the taxpayers 3.5 million dollars. However, as a

CTE, the remainder of the issues will be left to budgetary constraints, leaving the continued patchwork of repairs to other significant issues a question of affordability. And that leaves, once again, the CTEs with little alternatives to address the maintenance issues that are unique to a CTE. If we want to increase the number of students with a credential of value by 2025, we must improve the buildings in which they learn and provide the safety that is needed in a commercial setting.

Thank you for reading my testimony today and for your continued support of CTE. Our future is your future.