



# Manufacturers Association of Maine

Testimony of  
Jessica L. Laliberte  
On Behalf Manufacturers Association of Maine  
In Support of

***LD 1072 An Act Regarding Career and Technical Education and Memoranda of Understanding with Community Colleges***

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Jessica L. Laliberte, and I reside in Waterville. I serve as the policy relations manager for the Manufacturers Association of Maine, a non-partisan, pro-growth, pro-manufacturing industry organization representing hundreds of manufacturing businesses in our state and the thousands of employees they employ.

I am happy to testify today on behalf of our members, and our Executive Circle for Manufacturing Excellence in support of **LD 1072 An Act Regarding Career and Technical Education and Memoranda of Understanding with Community Colleges**.

CTE-high school partnerships significantly increase rates of high school graduation and college success. They offer an invaluable college-preparatory track. Skill acquisition during high school enables all students to improve their self-esteem, confidence, maturity, and competence. It allows them to participate in the economy directly after high school, to either pursue a career in the trades or to help earn their living while completing a two-year or four-year college degree.

A strong economy requires a highly educated workforce that can innovate and adapt to change. The jobs of the future will require education and training beyond high school and many of the highest growth and highest wage jobs will require some post-secondary degree or certification. Yet, Maine's higher education attainment rates trail regional rates. Faced with this gap in qualified workers, it is imperative that every Maine person achieve their highest educational potential. Now more than ever Maine businesses need the University and Community College systems to educate the workforce and develop ideas to help grow our economy. We need to enroll, educate, and most importantly graduate more people- people with the skills and knowledge for this changing economy.

Education is a critical investment in Maine, its people and in our economy. For our state to thrive we need a skilled workforce. This program allows students to not only earn their degree in a short

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period of time, they also will have a marketable skill and can join the workforce faster than ever before.

Maine's workforce is facing a crisis. We are the oldest state in the nation. Workers are retiring and there are few qualified candidates waiting to fill those vacancies. Today, manufacturing businesses across Maine have thousands of openings and no workers to fill them. Legislation such as this, we see as an opportunity to increase our skilled workforce and fill some of the 4,000 vacancies we have today.

We ask the committee to vote ought to pass and help make Maine a place where all can contribute and earn a good living.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to try to answer any questions you may have.

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