

**TESTIMONY OF
Brian Parke
L.D. 313, “An Act To Advance
Career and Technical Education
Opportunities in Maine”**



Good morning, Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Brian Parke and I am the President and CEO of the Maine Motor Transport Association and a resident of Brunswick. The Association is comprised of 1,600 member companies, whose employees make up a large portion of the more than 33,000 people who make their living in the trucking industry in Maine.

I am here to testify in support for LD 313 because our industry, like most heavy industries in Maine, face a continuing workforce shortage and we believe our Career and Technical Education Centers could be an important component to addressing these challenges.

For background, trucks in America move more than 11 billion tons of freight, which accounts for 71% of all the domestic freight tonnage. Our industry generated \$797 billion in annual revenue in 2018 and we moved the lion's share of the international trade with both Canada and Mexico. In Maine, 98% of all manufactured tonnage moves by truck and more than 84% of Maine communities depend exclusively on trucks to move their goods. But this can't be done without safe and professional truck drivers, skilled equipment technicians and the support staff behind the scenes that make our nation's supply and distribution chains efficient.

The truck driver shortage in particular is expected to grow worse in the coming years as more drivers move into retirement and the demand for freight transportation increases. According to the most recent numbers from the American Trucking Associations, over the next decade it is projected that the trucking industry will need to hire roughly 1.1 million new drivers, or an average of nearly 110,000 per year, to keep up with demand. This workforce shortage will inevitably have negative impacts on the economy and the cost of shipping goods will have to increase.

As an industry, we have identified many different ways to address this shortage. Many trucking companies are changing their routing to allow for more driver time at home, as well as changing compensation levels and implementing creative strategies that will address driver attraction and retention. Another focus has been on expanding the recruiting pool to make driving careers attractive to everyone who is qualified, including women, minorities and young people who might not otherwise consider trucking.

We know we need to do a better job connecting to the next generation of truckers and we see supporting CTE programs through this bill as a good step. We further support the formation of a career and technical education business roundtable and would offer our participation and perspective as an industry with long-term workforce needs.

Thank you for your consideration and for allowing me to submit written testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions the committee may have at the Work Session.