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Education and Cultural Affairs Committee

LD 313, "An Act To Advance Career and Technical Education Opportunities in Maine"
Joint Standing Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs
April 9, 2021

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs, my name is Senator David Woodsome and I am here today to introduce LD 313, "**An Act To Advance Career and Technical Education Opportunities in Maine.**"

Career and Technical Education (CTE) is the modern equivalent of what we used to call "shop" decades ago. However, as the kinds of professions that do not necessarily require a college degree become more and more sophisticated, the needs of these types of work and the technical skills required have become much more complicated.

Today, automobile engines are vastly different and complex. They include sophisticated electronics that vary among manufacturers. New technologies such as hybrid and fully electric vehicles have greatly increased the cost of teaching what was once simple engine repair.

To adapt and become more efficient, school districts teamed up to provide one CTE center that serves several different schools, spreading out the cost of equipment and training and allowing more opportunities in each CTE school.

The enormous upside to this advancement in technology is that a young person who chooses one of these professions can expect a much higher salary for their work after they become certified than in the past, and usually with far fewer years of learning and much lower education debt than their college-bound classmates.

The goals of this bill are to: create a process that allows students to explore their interest in career and technical education and allow them to try out different skill areas; create a career and technical education business roundtable, where interested employers would identify their workforce needs now and in the future; and address existing barriers to expanding comprehensive CTE programs by recommending changes to the CTE certification process to address the shortage of teachers by acknowledging skills demonstrated in a real-world trade or profession.

Overall, my hope is that the bill will help to create multiple pathways for students to learn and demonstrate their knowledge in the CTE setting while creating programs that address the State's critical skilled workforce shortage. Thank you for your consideration, I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.