



April 22, 2021

Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Maine State Legislature

100 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333

Good afternoon Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Distinguished Members of the Committee.

My name is Gwen Berry, I am a freshman at Maine Ocean School. Prior to this year, I went to the Bucksport schools all of my life. My grades were decent, my social skills were decent, but my ability to come out of my comfort zone was nonexistent. During 6th grade, I had a growing passion for the ocean. In Bucksport, we did not have any classes tailored to the ocean. We skimmed through that topic during biology, but that was all. I was bored in my classes because of that. I wanted to delve deeper into the wonderful world of the ocean. Thankfully, my parents had heard of a newly developed school right here in Maine. The Maine Ocean School. This school had everything that I wanted to study. I was overjoyed, and of course I applied during my 8th grade year. Let me tell you, my motivation to learn went up significantly once I started learning at MOS. The teachers here strive to give us the very best education, and keep it entertaining. Getting to learn about vessels, deep sea life, and other marine topics was just what I wanted.

Of course, this school is not easy. It challenges you to push yourself with out of the box thinking. We complete projects such as building a variety of 3d models. That's one of my favorite attributes about this school. It opens up more creativity. This school also offers more job and school opportunities in marine careers.

I have always been a shy person. I never wanted to ask questions in class which resulted in struggling grades, and I never wanted to meet new people. This school has changed that. I've only been here for less than a year, and I've already made more new friends than I can count. Everyone here shares one thing in common: the passion for the ocean. Maine Ocean School has changed my outlook on learning, and I'm so grateful for that.

In conclusion, please vote in favor of LD 1389 2021, so that more kids who have a passion for the ocean can experience this amazing education opportunity.

Thank you, Guinevere Berry