

Alexandra Cooper  
Orono

Senator Daughtry, Representative Brennan, and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. Thank you for reading my testimony today. My name is Alexandra Cooper and I live in Orono. I'm writing today to support LD 1329, An Act To Establish the Career Advancement and Navigation Initiative in the Department of Education To Lower Barriers to Career Advancement because all Mainers deserve to have an advocate to assist them with career and educational opportunities.

When I was in high school, I wanted to participate in my school's Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program. However, I would not be able to take the AP and Honors courses that I also wished to pursue. My father advocated for me to join the Adult Education class so that I could pursue my academic courses and the CNA program at the same time. He helped me to connect with the Adult Education program and advocated for me so that I could take the CNA class even though I was only 16. However, not everybody has an advocate like my father to help them navigate career opportunities.

If LD 1329 passes, unemployed and underemployed Mainers will have access to more opportunities and advocates like my father who can help guide them through educational and career services and supports. If I had not had the fortune of my father advocating for me and helping me to navigate career opportunities, I never would have been able to become a CNA and take care of the elderly in nursing and group homes. Because the Career Advancement and Navigation Initiative would provide guidance and support to underemployed and unemployed Mainers, people like me, but without an advocate like my father, will receive career guidance and educational services.

LD 1329 would provide access to essential career services and supports for Mainers without educational advocates. Please vote yes on LD 1329, An Act To Establish the Career Advancement and Navigation Initiative in the Department of Education To Lower Barriers to Career Advancement. Thank you again for your time and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.