

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Greg Dugal and I am representing Hospitality Maine and its 1000 hospitality members, in support of LD 1329, An Act To Establish the Career Advancement and Navigation Initiative in the Department of Education To Lower Barriers to Career Advancement

Like many other industries in the State, the hospitality industry is suffering from an acute labor shortage that can only be resolved by engaging young people, seniors with extra time on their hands, New Mainers and any other individuals that would like to work in a fun and people-oriented environment. HospitalityMaine has been engaged in apprenticeships, internships, micro-credentialing and designing curriculum with the Community College System in an effort to shore up our workforce. In the coming weeks we will be promoting all of these efforts through a media campaign but would also welcome the assistance of the navigation specialists that this legislation would create. We are in a critical labor shortage, but are doing everything we can to make sure our members are able to access the workforce they need for their businesses to survive for the foreseeable future.

Working with the Career Advancement and Navigation specialists' program could be just the thing we need to promote The Great Maine Comeback, as we call it, for our industry. By engaging the adult education directors and state and local governments around the state, this legislation would coordinate the needs from region to region providing a seamless one stop shop for potential employees looking to upgrade or acquire skills to be successful in many industries. Who knows best the needs for local employers and employees than the local education and government officials, who hear the trials and tribulations of their workforce and businesses on a regular basis. We also support a robust ESL program for our New Mainer residents and will be back to show support for these efforts as well in the future. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Gregory Dugal
HospitalityMaine

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