



The Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
Testimony from Jason Judd, Executive Director, Educate Maine

In Support Of

L.D. # 1329: “An Act To Establish the Career Advancement and Navigation Initiative in the Department of Education To Lower Barriers to Career Advancement”

April 22, 2021

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Jason Judd, Executive Director of Educate Maine, a business-led education advocacy organization. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of L.D. # 1329.

Educate Maine’s mission is to ensure that Maine people are prepared to succeed in education and career and that all Maine people reach their highest educational potential. As a member of the MaineSpark coalition, we measure this by attainment - the share of adult workers with a postsecondary credential of value in demand by Maine employers. Maine’s goal is to reach 60% by 2025. In order to reach this goal, we must focus on workforce attraction and ensure people new to Maine can pursue appropriate education opportunities leading to high quality jobs with Maine employers.

Maine is lucky to be home to so many people with workforce credentials earned in other countries. We constantly hear from people who have struggled to enter the Maine workforce because of the difficulty to recognize and transfer foreign credentials in Maine. We hear about the importance of upskilling and the need for strong language skills. We hear about the need for work-ready individuals who are prepared for success in the workforce. Maine Adult Education programs teach these skills. They have great success in supporting individuals to enter postsecondary education and employment. Adult Education programs are the bridge programs that connect adult learners with essential education, career development, and job training services.

This bill expands staffing for these essential programs. Investing in these hubs will allow more adults to receive services and ultimately connect with job opportunities in Maine. This investment will provide social mobility for families allowing them to thrive in our local communities. The investment will support foundational education programs which open up pathways for adults to pursue postsecondary education and transition to the workforce.

Investment in adult education is one of the most worthwhile investments we can make to help Maine adults transition into the workforce. I encourage committee members to support this bill. Thank you for your time.

Jason Judd
Educate Maine