



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 Hannah Mellor, I am a Junior from Stockton Springs, as well as the junior class representative of the Maine Ocean School student council.

A little over a year ago, I was in this exact room writing a testimony similar to this one. Despite what little change seems to be demonstrated within that statement, a lot has happened since the first time I testified.

The change that sticks out to most, and if not all of us, is the fact that we've been in the COVID-19 pandemic for a little over a year now. A pandemic that has knocked most schools to their knees, a pandemic that has left many students without an adequate education, and some with a lost sense of direction. Speaking from experience, being a highschool student in a global pandemic is hard- almost impossible.

Being the academically led student that I am, I can say with confidence that I would've continued to learn during this pandemic- no matter how that was achieved. But, with the help of Maine Ocean School, I didn't have to worry about that- not even for a second. We jumped into virtual learning almost immediately after schools were closed- we were prepared for this.

Theoretically, no high school student or staff should have had to adapt to these unfortunate circumstances. We all should've gotten the complete in-person education that past (and future) high school students have and will receive. But realistically, Maine Ocean School adapted to these sudden circumstances like I've never seen before. Realistically, Maine Ocean School students have continued with the same level of education as they were receiving



pre-pandemic.

I feel that I can quote my testimony from last year, because, despite the pandemic, it's still applicable now.

"I love this school - but more so - I'm passionate about this school because I'm academically challenged on a daily basis. I'm passionate about this school because I'm more responsive to the hands-on approach that Maine Ocean School has to offer. I'm passionate about this school because my teachers take the time to make sure students wholeheartedly understand what they're being taught and are able to apply that knowledge to future experiences. Now, instead of asking myself if I can do it, I ask myself what else I can do.

Now, let's be honest, regardless of what high school I attend, I would get anywhere I want in life. I would still attend the college I want to attend and complete all the classes I want to take. I'm a hardworking, capable student able of finding success anywhere. The difference in Maine Ocean School is that it's where I *want* to be successful. The Maine Ocean School makes me *want* to attend school. At Maine Ocean School, it's not solely about the grades you receive, but more about the quality of learning conducted.

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, passion can be defined as "a strong desire or devotion to some activity, object, or concept", and I, Hannah Mellor, am passionate about Maine Ocean School and what it has and is still going to teach me."

In conclusion, please vote in favor of LD 1389, so that future students may also benefit from the Maine Ocean School program as I have.