

AUGUSTA ADULT & COMMUNITY EDUCATION



April 22, 2021

Senator Daughtry, Representative Brennan and Members of the 130th Legislature's Education and Cultural Affairs Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify 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*. Augusta Adult and Community Education, as well as all other adult education programs, is a critical partner in providing services to those with barriers to employment, underemployed and the unemployed through our High School Equivalency and Workforce Development programming. We consistently hear from employers that they need a skilled workforce, but find it challenging to find employees. We also know that our learners are struggling to find meaningful work within their area of interest or skill set. We believe LD 1329 can help alleviate this disconnect by focusing on matching employer needs with student skills. Funding to help employers provide targeted training in partnership with adult education programs, as well as having a Career Advancement and Navigation Specialist would maximize our ability to support learners as they transition to the workforce.

Two examples of students that could utilize a Career Advancement and Navigation Specialist position and funding, right now in our program, are students who want to train in areas that Maine desperately needs workers. One aspires to be a truck/CDL driver and the other a mechanic. Having a dedicated Career and Navigation Specialist employed by Adult Education could help them navigate the process of obtaining a position in these fields and would increase our ability to integrate adults into the best employment for their skills/interests as well as provide essential workers for Maine employers. In addition, we can begin to chip away at underlying issues of poverty by providing livable working wages and financial stability for many Mainers.

We whole-heartedly support this bill and hope you will as well.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration today on this very important issue.

Sincerely,
Monique Roy
Director
Augusta Adult and Community Education

33 Union Street, Suite 2
Augusta, Maine 04330
Phone: 207-626-2470
Fax: 207-626-2529
Email: adulthood@augustaschools.org