



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 Kamren Start and I am a junior from Islesboro. Some of you might remember me from LD 2020 when I represented part of the student body. I am here again but to talk about something slightly different. As you all know COVID-19 has affected many schools, including mine.

I would like to talk about how Maine Ocean School has supported me through these difficult times. If you remember I am the student who took a ferry ride, public transportation, and a car to get to and from school every day. This has changed for me and I am now fully virtual.

As I am sure you know some students are struggling with being fully virtual but I am lucky enough that my school has fully supported me. Some of the things that they have done are providing me with a computer that was faster than my former one so I was able to stay in a Google Meet with a teacher and work on the assignment at the same time. They've also provided times for me to meet with my teachers no matter what the subject was about, meaning I was able to meet with them about personal things or a subject that I was struggling with. Since these things have been provided for me I have gotten comfortable with being online for school and I have seen personal growth in myself.

My school letting me become virtual and providing me with these things has made it so that I didn't have to transfer to my hometown's school. This means that I have been able to continue doing my maritime education which I feel passionate about. My school, even through these difficult times, has made sure the focus of our education is about the ocean and maritime industries.

Since Maine Ocean School has been able to provide me with this education through these difficult times by allowing me and others to become virtual, it has opened Maine Ocean School to more students. This has made the culture within the school richer and more vibrant. This is all possible because transportation is no longer a problem for students, all that we have to do is log onto your online classes. Making us a part of the Maine Ocean School's community. Which I think is important and is one of the best parts of my day.



A public magnet high school for marine  
science, technology, transportation, and engineering

Keeping this school open is vital for students that are interested in the maritime fields. If this pandemic has proved anything it is that Maine Ocean School is resilient and has high achieving students that **want** to learn. Not passing this bill means that students like me won't be able to have this community and education anywhere.

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.