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TO: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
FROM: Becky Smith, Director of Government and Community Relations
RE: LD 1412, *An Act To Require the Department of Education To Provide Information to Students Allowing Them To Make Informed Choices Regarding Their Education and Professional Futures*
DATE: April 27, 2021

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and member of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. Please accept this testimony neither for nor against LD 1412, *An Act To Require the Department of Education To Provide Information to Students Allowing Them To Make Informed Choices Regarding Their Education and Professional Futures* on behalf of the Maine Community College System.

We support Senator Pouliot’s intent to assure Maine’s students have the information they need in a form that is readily accessible. Much of this information required in this bill is already available from other sources and we are happy to share any of our data with the Department as they seek to provide assistance to our K-12 students.

As I spoke to members of the MCCS community about this bill, a few concerns were brought to my attention:

- 1) The data required to be gathered for each MCCS college and program and from DOL on wages and job availability, including short-term programs, would require constant data collection, synthesis, and analysis. There would have to be dedicated resources within the DOE to gather this data from the MCCS and DOL sites and to assure that the information is kept up-to-date and relevant. This will require significant technical resources that the MCCS and likely MDOL, and MDOE are currently lacking.
- 2) We felt that a list of the 50 most popular college, vocational school and CTE programs may unduly narrow the options a student is considering. The Maine Community College System offers many programs that prepare students for awesome career opportunities that most high school students would never think of and that as a result may not be considered “popular”. Students may have limited knowledge of the career opportunities open to them, which are often limited to their personal experience or that of the influencers in their lives.
- 3) Maine Learning Results already has Life and Career Ready Standards that, according to the DOE website, “... include an emphasis on multiple pathways toward meaningful careers and focus on life skills and experiences that will allow students to pivot as economic needs change and personal interests evolve. They have been crafted to allow flexibility and variation in focus and implementation, while ensuring all students exhibit key skills required to successfully navigate the changing career landscape.”

We know that many recent high school graduates, as well as adult learners, benefit from the affordable, high quality education that the Maine Community College System provides. We strive to equip all who are interested in the technical training and more generalized education we offer with the information they need to make informed decisions and will continue to do so in a way that is in line with our available resources.