



The Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
Testimony from Brian Harris, Co-Founder & CEO of MedRhythms

In Support Of

L.D. 1389

An Act to Provide Support for the Maine Discovery Museum's Informal Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education Programs Throughout the State

23 April 2023

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Brian Harris, Co-Founder & CEO at MedRhythms. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of L.D. 871, An Act to Provide Support for Maine Discovery Museum's Informal Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education Throughout the State.

General background:

To introduce myself, I am Brian Harris, the Co-Founder and CEO of MedRhythms, a company based in Portland, Maine, that is building innovative products at the intersection of neuroscience, technology, and music, with the vision to revolutionize medicine and bring important care to people across Maine and around the world. I am writing in support of this bill as I believe that the Maine Discovery Museum (MDM) is critical to setting the seed for science in Maine, which is important not only for Maine's youth, but also for the future of the economy and companies like ours at MedRhythms.

Currently, MDM receives no federal, state, or local government support outside of what we earn via competitive grants and as such would be transformative not just to MDM, but to Maine public science education. MDM is a critical player in helping Mainers (from all over the state) learn, especially in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). As someone who grew up in rural Maine (West Enfield), access to this education is crucial and research has shown that 95% of the population learns about science outside of the classroom (Falk, J. H., Dierking, L. D., 2010, *American Scientist*, vol. 98). For the great majority of people, this is accomplished through informal learning settings such as museums, science centers, and programs like those provided by MDM – making it even more critical, especially for rural communities like mine.

I have been a delighted and honored contributor to the Maine Science Festival, one of inspirational and impactful programs coordinated by the MDM and can say firsthand, that our state needs more of this. Additionally, as an entrepreneur who was born and raised in Maine (as is our other Co-Founder), we were excited to move MedRhythms back to Maine after starting in Boston, as we were passionate about the state, the economy, and wanted to be a part of changing the narrative around the economy and the state of science in Maine. We wanted to build an iconic global company and believed that we could do it from Maine, with Maine people and we still do – but, we also need more STEM employees here. This money helps to plant the seeds early on that it is possible to be successful in STEM in Maine and that there are opportunities for them *HERE*, an important notion that could influence the trajectory of their lives.

When paired with the recent development of the Roux Institute (an example of STEM education at the highest level), it creates a culture in which Maine is poised to be leader in STEM education, which ultimately impacts the lives of the individuals, the economy, and eventually people across the entire state through its impact. It is for all these reasons that I whole-heartedly support. LD871.

Sincerely,

Brian Harris

Brian Harris
Co-Founder & CEO
MedRhythms, Inc.