



# Manufacturers Association of Maine

**Testimony of**

**Jessica L. Laliberte**

**On behalf of the Manufacturers Association of Maine**

**Neither for Nor Against**

**LD 1517 An Act To Establish the Maine Workforce, Research, Development and Student Achievement Institute**

April 27, 2021

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Economic Advancement, and Business. My name is Jessica Laliberte and I serve as the policy relations manager for the Manufacturers Association of Maine. We are a non-partisan, pro-growth, pro-manufacturing trade organization. We represent 400 manufacturers and the 29,000 workers they employ in aerospace, metal, paper, marine/boat building, semi-conductor, wood, textile, aquaculture, biotech, medical device, electronics, RF and wireless communications, plastics, composites and bioplastics, studio and food and beverage manufacturing. Several of our members are employed owned or ESOP companies.

The Manufacturers Association of Maine has made workforce a top priority. The average age of an employee working in manufacturing is 54 years old. Our industry has thousands of job openings today and by 2030 it is projected the state's workforce will shrink by 65,000. Our industry is already facing the workforce crisis.

We have committed ourselves to promoting policies which:

- Develop a more productive workforce and encourage innovation through education reforms to combat Maine's growing need for skilled employees in today's evolving economy
- Attract the best and brightest to work here in Maine
- Increase the STEM education programs within the state education system to help close the growing gap in the math and science performance of our students
- An industry-led workforce strategy — The Maine Industry Partnership model to assess, provide, train and recruit for jobs in manufacturing

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*"The Manufacturers Association of Maine is dedicated to promoting and growing manufacturing."*

We appreciate the many efforts of the 130<sup>th</sup> Maine Legislature to address the work force challenge, however, these efforts seem siloed and duplicative. We need to build upon efforts that are currently happening in pockets across the state. There needs to be collaboration and coordination of efforts to allow the best and most successful outcome.

The Manufacturers Association would invite legislators to join us in a roundtable discussion of the workforce efforts we are taking part in. We want to be part of the planning and development of workforce plans.

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