



**Scott Cuddy**

47 Elm Street

Winterport, ME 04496

Phone: (207) 944-1662

[Scott.Cuddy@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:Scott.Cuddy@legislature.maine.gov)

# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

## Rep. Scott Cuddy's Testimony in Favor of LD 177

Senator Daughtry, Representative Sylvester and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing, my name is Scott Cuddy and I live in Winterport. I represent House District 98 which is comprised of Frankfort, Searsport, Swanville, and Winterport. I'm here before you today to speak in favor of LD 177.

I apologize for bringing you a concept draft at this late stage of the session, but I held onto this one so that I could address some issue that came to light. When I stood applauding the Governor's call for free community college for Mainers, I realized what I wanted to do with this bill.

Over the years, Maine has adopted a zeal for apprenticeship. I fully understand this. Apprenticeship is the best way to learn most any trade or profession. The combination of class time with actual work experience is time honored. I myself am a graduate of a four year apprenticeship in the IBEW. Because of this recognition of the value of apprenticeship, we have greatly increased the number of apprentices we are supporting. Sadly, we have not matched that with the amount of support we are giving them.

I'm proposing to add \$195,000 to the training reimbursement line for the Maine Apprenticeship Program. This will bring the total up to \$200,000. Those among you who are quick witted at math might realize that this means that the state of Maine is currently only funding training reimbursement at \$5,000 a year. If we value apprenticeship, then let's value them. \$5,000 a year for thousands of apprentices is not "valuing" them.

The bill will also require that the additional funds only be used for training reimbursements.

Thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions you may have.