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TO: Senator Nangle, Chair
Representative Stover, Chair
Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government
FROM: Becky Smith, Director of Government and Community Relations
RE: L.D. 1983, *An Act to Establish the Maine Buy American and Build Maine Act*
DATE: February 27th, 2024

This letter addresses *L.D. 1983, An Act to Establish the Maine Buy American and Build Maine Act*.

MCCS appreciates the interests and concerns underlying the intention of this bill. As a leader of workforce development throughout the state, we understand the importance of economic development and interstate economic opportunity. Indeed, our long-term goal at MCCS is to use educational opportunity to steadily and continually provide more Maine residents with higher-skilled and therefore higher-paying jobs throughout our state. In fact, MCCS trained close to 1,000 workers in the construction trades last year and through our short-term workforce trainings and our longer-term degree programs, we continue to support the workers in Maine’s construction industry.

We share the concerns on this bill as expressed by the Administration. Despite good intentions, political definitions and local hiring requirements like those in this bill rarely fit the realities of the market. In-state and out of state limits often are not, as a practical matter, capable of being effective. For example, Maine-based companies frequently utilize out-of-state contractors, and companies based in other states hire Maine workers and subcontractors as a necessary part of meeting workforce demands.

We are also concerned about the impact of this bill on our budget. We are currently experiencing very few bids on projects with the quoted costs often considerably high. It is well studied and understood that smaller markets create higher prices, and right now MCCS cannot afford potential cost increases or delays in procurement. Our resources are focused on addressing our student, faculty and staff needs in order to help close the skills gap that has become more profound in today’s economy. Any legislation that causes a structural increase in costs comes at the expense of developing the workforce Maine needs to thrive.

For the reasons set forth above, MCCS therefore respectfully requests that this Committee report this bill Ought Not to Pass.

Thank you for the courtesy of your consideration.