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*Association of Computer Technology Educators of Maine*

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**Testimony of:** Dennis Crowe

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I am here to support L.D. 256, An act to ensure continued availability of high-speed broadband Internet at Maine's schools and libraries.

More and more teachers are utilizing web resources to personalize instruction and improve the monitoring and management of student progress. This is particularly important in the advent of proficiency-based education where the number of formative assessments can be cumbersome. The use of web-based resources is only going to increase in the coming years.

When students and teachers enter a school, they assume that the water is going to run and the lights will come on. In the State of Maine Internet access in schools and libraries is becoming almost as ubiquitous. In many states across the country that is not the case. We are fortunate that Internet access is provided to all schools and libraries in the State at little or no cost. This was all made possible by the PUC approved plan in 1996 that resulted in the creation of the Maine School and Library Network (MSLN).

MSLN, working with NetworkMaine, is clearly positioned to provide the exceptional broadband service to schools and libraries in the State at a much lower cost than if each individual school district or library were to purchase the service individually. In addition, MSLN provides content filtering for schools, web hosting, email account for libraries, and library databases for content that isn't free on the Internet. However, the funding for MSLN is declining. As Mainers make fewer phone calls, the amount of money received from the Maine Telecommunications Education Access Fund (MTEAF) and matching federal e-rate funds continue to drop. The proposed solution in LD 256 will provide that needed funding.

With the current funding issues facing our schools and libraries, if MSLN were no longer able to provide Internet access, schools and libraries would have to start paying much more for broadband, and many could not afford adequate bandwidth. While most students and teachers in Maine don't know that MSLN exists, the technology leaders in the State know the importance of continuing this exceptional service and we strongly support LD 256.