

**TESTIMONY  
OF  
NICHI FARNHAM, COMMISSION CHAIR  
MAINE CHARTER SCHOOL COMMISSION**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs  
And the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Hearing Date: February 22, 2021

**LD 221 “An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds, and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2022 and June 30, 2023”**

Senators Breen and Daughtry, Representatives Pierce and Brennan, and Members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Nichi Farnham and I am the Chair of the Maine Charter School Commission. I am here today to present testimony for the Commission’s Biennial Budget request.

The Commission was established in Public Law 2011, chapter 414 and is comprised of seven volunteer members that support the work of authorizing and monitoring the state’s public charter schools. Of the seven members, three serve concurrently on the Charter School Commission and the State Board of Education. The other four members are appointed by the Governor.

The Maine Charter School Commission authorizes and monitors the ten public charter schools across the state. In doing so, the Commission seeks to increase student achievement by supporting high-performing schools, promoting innovative educational opportunities in diverse public-school settings, creating new professional opportunities for educators, and novel

approaches for community engagement in the design, execution and delivery of education to the state's children.

By law, the Charter School Commission may charge up to 3% of annual per-pupil allocations received by each public charter school that it authorizes. Currently, the Commission receives 2.25% which covers the cost of its oversight.

The revenue projections for this Biennium Budget are based on 2.25% and the baseline budget for the Commission can be found on page A-91 in the Recommended General Fund Biennial Budget document – Part A. The Other Special Revenue Funds request is \$694,809 in each year of the biennium. There are no new initiatives for the Commission.

This concludes my testimony for the Maine Charter School Commission. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.