

February 9, 2023

**In support of LD 156**

**An Act to Require Outdoor Recess Time for Students from Grade 6 to Grade 8**

Good afternoon Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the education and cultural affairs committee, my name is Dylan Smyth.

I am 11 years old and a sixth grader at Lyman Moore middle school in Portland Maine. I am here to ask you to pass LD 156, An Act to Require Outdoor Recess Time for Students from Grade 6 to Grade 8.

I wanted to talk to you today because my middle school doesn't have recess and I think it's a big problem. In my elementary school we had recess every single day for 30 minutes. We used that time to run around, get exercise and fresh air, and hang out with friends. I even launched my Dungeons and Dragons club during recess - which I am still running at my middle school.

But when I started middle school that ended. Having no recess at all is a really big change for me - and not a good one.

For someone like me - who spent the past 6 years with the same 18 kids in our Spanish Immersion program, it's really important that I get time to stay connected with my old friends and have a chance to make new friends. It's not just me. It's having a lot of impact on my classmates as well. Kids - including me - are getting in trouble for trying to talk to our friends between classes or during class because they barely get any social time. And since they took out lockers - we don't even have that little time built in to socialize in the halls that kids used to have.

I also have a harder time focusing on my work when I don't get any breaks in the day. And since I had to choose between Art and Gym, and I chose to take Art, I don't get any exercise at all during the school week. I'm there all day long -

starting at 8am, and my only chance for a break is to get a hall pass and walk around for a few minutes, by myself, inside. So I don't get fresh air. I don't get social time, and I don't get to run around and really move.

Lastly, it doesn't seem right that some middle schoolers have recess and some, like mine, don't. Since the science and our CDC say recess is an important part of learning, health and social development for my age - we should all have it.

This bill would help change that. Please vote Ought to Pass on LD 156. I am happy to take questions.