

TESTIMONY OF KIM BARNES

LD 1064 - Ought to Pass

An Act to Increase the Minimum Teacher Salary

April 5, 2023

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs: My name is Kim Barnes, I am a resident of Caribou and the 2019 Aroostook County Teacher of the Year. I am writing as a private citizen, not as a representative of any school, district, or organization. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in favor of #LD #1064 - “An Act to Increase the Minimum Teacher Salary.”

According to the article, “As Teacher Departures Arise, Solutions Could Be a Year or More Away”, published in *The Maine Monitor* in February of 2023, Maine saw 927 teacher retirements and over 1,300 school staff personnel resign from their positions in 2022. These numbers are the highest they’ve been in seven years and illustrate the reality that Maine schools are facing: unfilled teaching positions as a result of a shortage of qualified teachers. Teacher recruitment and retention in Maine starts with ensuring Maine teachers have a livable wage. Increasing the minimum teacher salary would have a positive impact on teacher recruitment and retention efforts of school districts across Maine so that regardless of region, all schools will have qualified teachers educating Maine students. With strong teacher preparation programs across the state, raising the minimum teacher salary would also entice qualified teachers to stay in Maine, rather than leave the state for higher paying teaching positions.

Additionally, many teachers have to work a second job in order to afford to live in Maine. They shouldn’t have to, but they do. Teachers spend their own money in their classrooms to support student learning. They shouldn’t have to, but they do. Teachers often have to decide whether to stay in education or find higher paying employment. They shouldn’t have to, but they do. Teachers do all of these things because teaching is a calling, a calling that requires teachers to selflessly give of themselves as they work to reach all children in the classroom. Investing in teachers ultimately is an investment in the future of Maine children. Please support #LD #1064 - “An Act to Increase the Minimum Teacher Salary.” Help teachers stay in Maine classrooms where their impact is truly realized.

Thank you for your time, the opportunity to submit testimony, and for considering this in your deliberations.

Things to remember:

- This section is a work in progress - You are the expert in your experience as an educator and professional.

Here is an example of how testimony can be structured:

Introduction:

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is [your name], I am a resident of [your town] and the [your title] County/State Teacher of the Year. (clause about speaking as a private citizen...not a representative of the school)

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony [in favor of/against/ neither for nor against] LD # [insert number and/or title].

Context & Key Message(s):

Briefly share your personal/organizational connection to the bill...

Identify one or two reasons why legislators should support or oppose this bill – just one sentence on each.

Illustrate your reasoning:

Tell a personal story, share an experience, or provide data that illustrate your key messages and give specific examples of the proposal's impact on your learners, colleagues, and/or the teaching profession.

Closing:

Briefly summarize your main message and “For these reasons, I/We strongly urge the Committee to vote unanimously ought to pass/ought not to pass.”

Thank the committee for the opportunity to testify and for considering the issue and your position in its deliberations.

Example Testimony from the 131st Legislative Session:

- [Kaitlin Young, 2018 Maine Teacher of the Year](#)
- [Joseph Hennessey, 2019 Maine Teacher of the Year](#)
- [Matt Bernstein, 2023 Maine Teacher of the Year](#)
- [Dolly Sullivan, MTOY Program Director](#)
- [Jason Judd, Executive Director, Educate Maine](#)