

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

L.D. 1263

### AN ACT TO REQUIRE SCHOOL IDENTIFICATION CARDS TO INCLUDE THE TELEPHONE NUMBER OF A SUICIDE PREVENTION HOTLINE

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Eileen King, deputy executive director of Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association, in support of L.D. 1263.

Mental health crises and suicides in teens have been up since before the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in late December 2019. A June 2021 study published by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control indicated that mental health-related emergency room visits were up 31% compared to the year before.

Schools today are facing an increasing, and necessary pressure to offer readily available mental health resources to students. Districts recognize the need to be aware and proactive in regard to the mental health crisis amongst youths and are ready to take further steps to ensure their students have the resources they need at all times.

Adding suicide prevention lifelines to student ID cards is a significant step in the right direction. It puts resources directly into the hands of students who are struggling with their mental health and into the hands of friends who can help.

Another approach to support the intent of this bill would be to add the suicide prevention hotline on the devices that are issued by our schools in case the student loses their ID card, or for those districts who don't issue ID card.