

John Lewis
Cape Elizabeth
LD 394

Dear Respective Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

My name is John Lewis and I am submitting public comment on LD 394 - Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 117: Rule Regarding the Duties of School Counselors and School Social Workers, am Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Education. More specifically, I am referring to Section 2: Definitions, F. Privileged Communication.

It is well-documented that students whose parents are engaged in all aspects of a child's education have greater success. Rules like proposed Chapter 117 are intended to remove parents from the equation.

If we are to acknowledge children with mental health challenges experience higher rates of suicide, then the very first instinct should be to partner with the parents to support that child just as the parents should partner with the school. We can accomplish so much more by working together. This is the best chance in ensuring the child gets what they need.

We have seen policies like this at the local level and we have seen tremendous pushback. It is now happening at the top and will be pushed down to every school in Maine. Policies like this create a greater divide between schools and parents. It also drives a wedge between parent and child. More importantly it will not help the child in the end.

I encourage a vote of Ought Not to Pass.

Thank you,

John Lewis
Cape Elizabeth, ME