

Nancy Hudak
Standish
LD 394

April 6, 2023

Re: LD 394: Chapter 117

Dear Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and respected members of the Education and Cultural Affairs committee:

I am Nancy Hudak, a resident of Standish, and I am asking you to vote in favor of LD394. I believe some professional groups have offered clarifying language which I would also encourage you to adopt as part of the legislation as it goes forward to the full Legislature.

Chapter 117 was originally developed in the 1980s when the current rules made sense. At the time, there were only school counselors, who served all students with a general focus on academic, career guidance, some limited social/emotional interventions and counseling, along with social workers, who often served the special education needs of individual students as required by their Individual Education Plans (IEPs) developed by their Pupil Evaluation Team (PET) under federal and state law. There were very few school psychologists and their time was often taken up with assessments of all sorts.

The world has changed in forty years and the enabling legislation needs to move with the times.

All school counselors, social workers, psychologists, teachers, and administrators are licensed by the State of Maine. I trust their collective judgment.

Some commenters recently, however, seem to believe that “parental rights” are enshrined in law as superior to every other and that those “rights” mean they can control all aspects of their children’s lives. Even if that were true (it is not), they do not have the authority to control other students’ lives. By opposing this bill and thereby limiting the services Maine’s education professionals can provide in the very few hours students are in school buildings, they are affecting the lives of Maine students statewide.

I urge you to reject the calls to oppose this bill. Please send it along to the House and Senate with your recommendation for adoption.