

Tom Berry
Kennebunk
LD 1443

April 21, 2023

To: Senator Tim Nangle, Representative Holly Stover, and Honorable Members of the Committee

From: Tom Berry

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 1443, "An Act to Establish a Recall Process for Public School Board Members."

My name is Tom Berry and I have lived in Kennebunk for 30 years.

I am writing as a retired public school educator and concerned citizen to urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 1443.

We have all seen - across the country and even here in Maine - how groups with political agendas have sought to impose their ideas on local communities through specific tactics like disruptions at school board meetings and attempting to force recall elections for board members whose views don't align with theirs. There are those who say that this is "just the democratic process" at work. I would suggest that it actually undermines the democratic process that we already have, where there are regularly-scheduled elections to either re-elect or replace school board members according to the will of the people.

(Last year, here in Kennebunk, the community experienced such a scheme where a concerted attempt was made to remove two school board members for purported "reasons" that were shown to be not based on any actual facts but rather, evidently, on personal animus. Although the attempt to oust these board members was eventually soundly defeated, the experience was long, rancorous, and exhausting for the town. And, clearly, unnecessary.) If one disagrees with a particular school board member's views towards education, let that person either run for that seat in the next election or support a different, preferred candidate.

The provisions in LD 1443 delineate clear and common sense guidelines for establishing grounds for recalling a school board member.

I urge you again to support this civil and orderly approach where the recall option is reserved -

as had historically been the case - for truly exceptional errant behaviors on the part of an individual board member.

Thank you all for considering this testimony.