

Holly Eaton
Deer Isle
LD 1491

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Testimony of Representative Holly Eaton introducing
LD 1491, An Act to Support Rural Education
Before the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee

Good morning, Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and esteemed members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. My name is Holly Eaton, and I represent House District 15, which includes the communities of Brooklin, Deer Isle, Frenchboro, Marshall Island, Southwest Harbor, Stonington, Swan's Island, Tremont, Eagle Island Township, Isle au Haut and Vinalhaven. I am here today to introduce LD 1491, An Act to Support Rural Education.

As I am sure this committee is well aware, from Deer Isle to Farmington to Madawaska, our rural schools and teachers need more support. This bill takes several steps in the right direction, including financial incentives for qualified students to do their student teaching in rural schools and a program to support qualified rural teachers in schools with continuing their education.

LD 1491 would increase the recruitment of teachers by expanding access to teacher preparation programs. It would provide up to 20 grants to financially assist student teachers and 15, one-time stipends to support the continuing education of teachers currently working in rural areas.

This bill also directs Commissioner Makin to appoint a rural education coordinator to increase the recruitment of teachers in rural areas and support and improve access to teacher preparation programs for those willing to teach in rural parts of the State.

I know that this committee has already heard several bills this session to address the teacher shortage. What sets LD 1491 apart is the targeted approach to address the rural education workforce shortage.

I ask for your support of an Ought to Pass report on LD 1491. Thank you for your time and attention.