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LD 1817

I was disturbed to learn about LD1817 and its focus on only overnight outdoor experiences for children. Having had a child in MSAD37 who benefitted from outdoor opportunities through the school in our community, I can tell you how meaningful those regular outdoor learning experiences have been.

I strongly advocate funding for outdoor education. What we know about outdoor experiences and mental health supports this as well. However, school districts should have the latitude to secure the outdoor experiences that best support the children in their community.

Only funding organizations with overnight facilities is counterintuitive to providing students with regular opportunities in their home region. Our rural community does not have overnight options close by. Therefore, transporting our children - if they continue to receive these outdoor education experiences - will be more expensive. I would rather see more of the funds spent on regular outdoor education experiences than transportation and housing. It sounds very sustainable - especially when we have an excellent outdoor education program in our community.

Please reconsider this bill and shape it so that school districts may utilize programming in their communities in the broadest sense.