



Maine Education Association

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Testimony

Neither for Nor Against

**LD 2089: An Act to Require Schools to Provide Instruction Regarding Prevention of the Illegal Use of Fentanyl and Other Drugs and Drug Poisoning Awareness in Grades 6-12 and to Establish Drug Poisoning Awareness Week
Before the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee
January 24, 2024**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan other esteemed members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

I am Jan Kosinski and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Maine Education Association (MEA) neither for nor against LD 2089, An Act to Require Schools to Provide Instruction Regarding Prevention of the Illegal Use of Fentanyl and Other Drugs and Drug Poisoning Awareness in Grades 6-12 and to Establish Drug Poisoning Awareness Week. The MEA represents nearly 24,000 educators in nearly every public school in the state.

We agree with the sponsor about the importance of educating students about the dangers of drugs, especially the highly addictive nature of fentanyl and the tragedy families face when individuals they love become hooked on this substance. Certainly, our state has a major issue with the use of opioids and families across the state are reeling from the damaging impacts.

However, we do not support this bill as written for two reasons.

First, as articulated by Deb McIntyre of the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association, much of what is called for in this bill is already covered in the Health standards that are part of the Maine Learning Results. We certainly feel this education should be and is happening in schools in a manner that is consistent with the Learning Results and at the age-appropriate level.

But our major concern is not about this bill alone. Instead, we are deeply concerned about the various mandates currently before this Committee. There are proposals before this Committee to insist on greater integration of African American studies in the curriculum, LD 2001. A similar proposal addresses Wabanaki Studies (LD 1642). Yet another proposes a specific course regarding personal finance (LD 1284). These proposals are in addition to the various proposals that were contemplated by the Committee last year and were combined in the MEPRI report regarding the school day. Those proposals included requirements for bike safety, 30-minute recess, 30-minute lunch periods, hunter safety, among others. Any one of these proposals may be manageable for schools. Combining one or more together could present a crushing workload as schools are faced with implementing several mandates at the same time. This is not a recipe for success.

Thank you for your time and I will do my best to answer any questions you may have.

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