

February 25, 2025

Testimony in Support of LD 34: An Act to Increase the Minimum Salary for Teachers

Honorable Members of the Maine State Legislature,

I am writing to express my strong support for LD 34, An Act to Increase the Minimum Salary for Teachers. As a veteran teacher of thirty years and the 2025 Maine State Teacher of the Year, I advocate for the future of education in Maine. Please consider the significant and long-lasting benefits of raising the minimum salary for our teachers.

First, it is essential to recognize that teachers are highly educated professionals. Many teachers in Maine earn significantly less than professionals with similar levels of education and expertise. This salary gap sends the message that the profession of teaching is undervalued, which has far-reaching consequences for both the recruitment and retention of educators.

The cost of living in Maine has risen dramatically in recent years, particularly when it comes to housing. Teachers are struggling to afford suitable housing on their starting salaries. By increasing teacher salaries, we will help ease the financial strain on educators and ensure that more individuals can afford to live in the communities where they work.

Finally, there has been a decline in the number of college students pursuing degrees in education. The lack of financial incentives and the heavy workload associated with the profession have led many young people to pursue other career paths. Raising the starting salary for teachers will help reverse this trend, encouraging more students to enter the field of education and strengthening the future of our schools.

Raising the minimum salary for teachers is not only a matter of fairness but also a critical step in ensuring the long-term success of our educational system. It will attract talented individuals to the profession, ease the burden on current educators, and ensure that we continue to provide a high-quality education to our children. I urge you to support LD 34 and take meaningful action to address the teacher salary crisis in Maine.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Becky Hallowell
Whitefield, Maine