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President of the Senate

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

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**Testimony in Support of
LD 34, An Act to Increase the Minimum Salary for Teachers
Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
February 26, 2025**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Esteemed Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Mattie Daughtry. I serve as President of the Maine Senate and proudly represent Senate District 23, including Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, Pownall, Chebeague Island, and part of Yarmouth. I am honored to co-sponsor LD 34, “An Act to Increase the Minimum Salary for Teachers,” a bill designed to incrementally increase the minimum salary for our state’s certified teachers and career and technical education teachers—a crucial step in strengthening Maine’s educational system.

My dedication to this cause is deeply personal. Although I come from a proud lineage of educators—my mother and grandmother devoted their lives to teaching—I found myself unable to follow in their footsteps due to the economic realities of low starting salaries and the burden of student debt. Nevertheless, their passion instilled in me a profound respect for the profession, and the very barriers that kept me from following in their footsteps cemented my determination to ensure every educator receives the fair compensation they deserve.

LD 34 provides a clear roadmap to achieving fair compensation for our educators:

- For the 2026–2027 school year, the minimum salary will be set at \$45,000.
- In the 2027–2028 school year, it will rise to \$47,500.
- For the 2028–2029 school year, the minimum salary will be \$50,000.
- In the 2029–2030 school year, it will increase further to \$52,500.
- Beyond the 2030 school year, the minimum salary will be adjusted annually using a cost-of-living formula, ensuring that our teachers’ compensation remains competitive amid evolving economic conditions.

Maine has made commendable progress in valuing our educators. Yet, we must continue this important work to further fortify our education system. Strengthening teacher compensation is not just about improving paychecks—it is about investing in our future, attracting and retaining high-caliber educators, and ultimately providing every student in Maine with an exceptional learning environment.

I respectfully urge my colleagues to join me in supporting LD 34. Together, we can forge a brighter, more equitable future for our teachers, our students, and our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.