

My name is Kerrie Dowdy, and I am a 30-year veteran 3rd grade teacher currently serving as the President of the Portland Education Association. I also live in Portland

I am here today to testify in support of the following to address the crippling shortages of qualified educators in our schools all over Maine, I call on the state to approve a new minimum teacher salary of \$50,000 so we can begin to have a better chance of recruiting more to join the profession.

Here are the words of one of our teachers in the Portland Public Schools:

*I was on the waiting list for an Affordable Housing Co-op being built in Portland and was just [emailed a document](#) that included eligibility for it. Based on my income (\$52,000) with PPS after working for five years, I do not meet the minimum salary requirements for a single person to be eligible for this affordable housing program. The reason is that HUD does not recommend buyers spend more than 40% of their monthly income on monthly costs (which in this case is \$1900-\$2200 for a studio or 1 bedroom, respectively). This means that because of my low salary with PPS, I am completely locked out of both traditional and alternative housing markets in the city where I teach.*

*There are a lot of factors that make housing a challenge. A big one is that they are calculating "affordability" based on Area Median Income, which is completely skewed by remote workers. I'm not sure anyone fully understands how difficult it is to work and afford to live in Portland, or anywhere in Southern Maine for that matter, as a younger teacher. If Maine is trying to sustain and attract new teachers, especially from out of state, they should be working very hard to make salaries competitive and/or working on housing supplements for public school teachers.*

So this devoted educator, working in the PPS as a HS Social Studies teacher for five years, did not qualify for "affordable housing" in Portland because they could not meet the minimum salary requirements.

Thank you,  
Kerrie Dowdy