

Dear Senator Rafferty, Rep Murphy, and Members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

I am writing to express my strong support for LD 34, "An Act to Increase the Minimum Salary for Teachers." This bill is an essential step toward ensuring that Maine's educators receive fair and competitive compensation, which is crucial for attracting and retaining talented teachers.

It is important to note that if actual inflation had been accounted for, the state would be funding the Essential Programs and Services (EPS) model with a base teacher salary of \$47,364.73. This figure highlights the disparity between current funding levels and the true cost of living faced by our educators. By recognizing this gap, LD 34 acknowledges the financial challenges that teachers endure and takes action to bridge it.

To ensure that schools are adequately funded to support the salary increases proposed in this bill, the EPS school funding formula should also be updated to use the Maine Chained Consumer Price Index. This adjustment would provide a more accurate measure of inflation and help maintain equitable and sustainable school funding in the future.

Investing in teacher salaries is investing in the future of our children and communities. Adequate compensation allows teachers to focus on delivering high-quality education without the added burden of financial stress. This bill not only values the hard work and dedication of our educators but also strengthens the learning environment for students across Maine.

I strongly urge you to support LD 34 and to consider updating the EPS funding formula to reflect actual inflationary pressures. Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your ongoing commitment to advancing educational opportunities in Maine.

For reference here is the inflation date used:

Year of Inflation	Actual CPI Rate	EPS Inflation Rate
2004	102.99	101.8
2005	103.17	102.4
2006	104.15	102.9
2007	102.36	102.9
2008	105.6	102.9
2009	97.9	102.5
2010	101.24	101.6
2011	103.63	101.1
2012	101.41	101.1
2013	101.96	101.5
2014	101.99	101.6
2015	100.17	101.6
2016	100.83	101.5
2017	101.73	101.3
2018	102.95	101.7
2019	101.81	102.2
2020	100.99	101.8
2021	105.37	101.5
2022	108.52	102.2
2023	103.18	101.9
2024	103	102.6

Here is the effect on the base teacher rate in the EPS model:

Year of funding	EPS Base Amount for Teacher	EPS Base if actual inflation was used
FY2006	\$ 28,485.81	\$ 28,485.81
FY2007	\$ 29,169.47	\$ 29,388.81
FY2008	\$ 30,015.38	\$ 30,608.44
FY2009	\$ 30,885.83	\$ 31,330.80
FY2010	\$ 31,781.52	\$ 33,085.33
FY2011	\$ 32,576.05	\$ 32,390.53
FY2012	\$ 33,097.27	\$ 32,792.18
FY2013	\$ 33,461.34	\$ 33,982.53
FY2014	\$ 33,829.41	\$ 34,461.69
FY2015	\$ 34,336.86	\$ 35,137.14
FY2016	\$ 34,886.25	\$ 35,836.36
FY2017	\$ 35,444.43	\$ 35,897.29
FY2018	\$ 35,976.09	\$ 36,195.23
FY2019	\$ 36,443.78	\$ 36,821.41
FY2020	\$ 37,063.33	\$ 37,907.64
FY2021	\$ 37,878.72	\$ 38,593.77
FY2022	\$ 38,560.54	\$ 38,975.85
FY2023	\$ 39,138.94	\$ 41,068.85
FY2024	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 44,567.92
FY2025	\$ 40,760.00	\$ 45,985.18
FY2026	\$ 41,820.00	\$ 47,364.73

Sincerely,

Tyler Backus

Oakland, Maine