



**TESTIMONY OF GLBTQ LEGAL ADVOCATES & DEFENDERS IN SUPPORT OF
LD 501, AN ACT TO FAIRLY FUND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS FOR
ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS**

Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs
February 25, 2025

Dear Senate Chair Rafferty, House Chair Murphy, and Distinguished Members of the Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs,

GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD Law) is a nonprofit legal organization that works in New England and nationally to create a just society free of discrimination based on gender identity and expression, HIV status, and sexual orientation. We appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony in Support of LD 501, An Act to Fairly Fund School Administrative Units for Economically Disadvantaged Students.

Maine Children's Alliance has reported that although the official child poverty rate has been falling since 2012, it remains above the rate for the general population, with a poverty rate of 14.7 for children under six and 13.8 percent for children under eighteen.¹ Child poverty rates are particularly high for Black and for American Indian or Alaska Native children – approximately 32 percent.² And national data suggest that LGBTQ parents are more likely to be living in poverty than their non-LGBTQ peers.³

Students who are economically disadvantaged have a lower four-year graduation rate – 77.6 percent for economically disadvantaged students compared to 86 percent for all students.⁴ And the schools who serve them need sufficient resources to effectively educate and support these students and the entire school community. GLAD Law strongly supports this important bill.

Sincerely,

¹ Maine Children's Alliance, *2023 Maine Kids Count* 27,
https://mainechildrensalliance.org/site/assets/files/2024/2023_kidscount_databook_interactive.pdf.

² *Id.* at 28.

³ Bianca D.M. Wilson & Lauren J.A. Bouton, *LGBTQ Parenting in the US*, Williams Institute (2024)
[https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/lgbt-parenting-us/#:~:text=LGBTQ%20parents%20are%20more%20likely,parents%20and%20straight%20cisgender%20parents.&text=Parents%20represent%20an%20important%20demographic.and%20queer%2B%20\(LGBTQ\)%20people.](https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/publications/lgbt-parenting-us/#:~:text=LGBTQ%20parents%20are%20more%20likely,parents%20and%20straight%20cisgender%20parents.&text=Parents%20represent%20an%20important%20demographic.and%20queer%2B%20(LGBTQ)%20people.)

⁴ Maine Children's Alliance, *2023 Maine Kids Count* 43
https://mainechildrensalliance.org/site/assets/files/2024/2023_kidscount_databook_interactive.pdf.

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