



Testimony Neither For Nor Against LD 34: An Act to Increase the Minimum Salary for Teachers

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Gay Anne McDonald and I am the Executive Director for the Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities (MADSEC).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the MADSEC Legislative Committee pursuant to LD 34: *An Act to Increase the Minimum Salary for Teachers*. MADSEC provides testimony neither for nor against LD 34.

MADSEC recognizes the significant challenges faced by educators in our state and supports measures that acknowledge the vital role teachers play in the education of our students. In particular, we commend the proposal's intention to increase teacher salaries—a much-needed step to help attract and retain quality educators, which ultimately benefits our students and communities.

Additionally, Maine teachers are the lowest paid in New England and there is a significant upward trend in the number of teachers leaving the field. A teacher shortage, specifically in special education, is not new. It is a long standing issue, exacerbated by the pandemic, and only expected to worsen. Should our state not intervene, we will not only lose the dedicated teachers currently working in Maine, but will continue to struggle in recruiting highly educated teachers to work and educate our youth in Maine.

At the same time, MADSEC wishes to express concern regarding Section 5 of LD 34. This section addresses the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) provisions, and while we understand the intent is to ensure that salary increases remain relevant in the face of economic fluctuations, we have concern such an unknown figure could significantly impact school budgets in the coming years. For this reason, MADSEC is providing testimony neither for nor against LD 34 and respectfully recommends an amendment to this bill for the removal of section 5.

While we remain supportive of the intent to raise teacher salaries in Maine, we are also cognizant of the fiscal implications to school budgets resulting in potential cuts and negative impacts to students. By addressing the concern with Section 5 in LD 34, we believe the legislation could better serve its intended purpose of supporting our educators while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

Thank you for your time and dedication to advancing Maine's educational system.

Respectfully,

Gay Anne McDonald

Executive Director

Lesley Snyder, RSU 87, President
Dr. Deb Murphy, RSU 2, President- Elect
Jody Raymond, Stillwater Academy, Vice President
Angela Moore, Brewer School Dept., Secretary
Cheryl Mercier, RSU 18, Treasurer
Kathy Hamblen, Gorham School Dept., Past President

49 Community Dr., #1
Augusta, ME 04330
gmcdonald@madsec.org
www.madsec.org