



Testimony In Support of LD 71: An Act Regarding Special Education Funding

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 71: *An Act Regarding Special Education Funding*. MADSEC provides testimony in support of LD 71, legislation that represents a vital commitment to ensuring equitable special education state funding for all students with disabilities throughout Maine.

MADSEC endorses LD 71 with the position that the minimum state share of a school administrative unit's special education costs be 55% for all school administrative units. We believe that this funding distribution is essential to empower educators and administrators in meeting the diverse needs of students with disabilities, ensuring that every student receives the specialized services and support necessary to success academically, functionally, and developmentally.

In advocating for LD 71, MADSEC stresses the immediate implementation of this bill is necessary to secure funding for the much needed resources for special education programs.

MADSEC would like to acknowledge the ongoing study conducted by the Maine Educational Policy Research Institute (MEPRI) on EPS funding. This study is expected to provide important insights and potential recommendations regarding the state's current funding structures. We recognize, however, that the study's conclusions are forthcoming and any statute changes would need to follow legislative procedures. Until such time, it remains imperative that we move forward with the current legislative measures under LD 71.

In conclusion, while we await the MEPRI study's recommendations, MADSEC remains in support of LD 71. Our commitment to all students with disabilities is unwavering, regardless of their geographic location within Maine.

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

Respectfully,

Gay Anne McDonald

Executive Director

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