

RE: Testimony in Support of LD 98: An Act to Include School Counselors in the Educators for Maine Program

February 25, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

We are writing this letter on behalf of the University of Southern Maine (USM) Counselor Education Program, Husson University Counselor Education Program, and the USM School Counseling Advisory Board regarding the opportunity to submit this testimony in strong support of LD 98, which seeks to expand the Educators for Maine Program to include school counselors.

Maine is experiencing an increasing shortage of school counselors, especially in rural and underserved areas. School counselors are essential to the objectives of LD 98, emphasizing the support of education professionals in the most needed regions. By encouraging individuals to obtain a master's degree in school counseling, Maine can help fill workforce gaps, leading to better support for students and schools across the state.

Including school counselors in the Educators for Maine Program is fiscally viable, as the bill's language states that the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) can absorb this role into the existing budget. We need more school counselors in Maine and individuals pursuing the rigorous degree and internship experiences this role requires to support our schools' increasing mental health needs. For these reasons, I urge you to support LD 98 132 to strengthen Maine's educational workforce and provide necessary assistance to those committed to serving our students.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Edelman Ph.D., 075 School Counselor  
On behalf of Members of the Intercollegiate School Counseling Committee  
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