



Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Support Of

LD 71 - An Act Regarding Special Education Funding

February 26, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and members of the Education & Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Rebecca Lambert, and I am providing testimony in support of LD 71 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association's (MMA) elected 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC). For reference, the LPC guides MMA's advocacy efforts and establishes positions on bills of municipal interest.

Municipalities strongly advocate for sustained and increased funding for special education and are committed to providing every child with a quality education. However, the financial realities of special education services present a growing challenge for many communities.

One major issue that can affect budgets is the cost of out-of-district special education placements. While school leaders aim to support students within their schools, some require specialized programs that the district simply cannot provide. A single out-of-district placement can come with a significant cost, including tuition and transportation. When multiple placements are needed, these expenses can quickly strain local budgets, forcing decisions that will impact all students.

Without adequate and consistent school funding, municipalities must divert resources from their critical programs, leading to gaps in services and increased financial pressure on property taxpayers. Investing in special education funding is a positive step towards ensuring all students receive the education they deserve.

Thank you for your time and considering the municipal perspective.

