

William Thompson
Brunswick, Maine

2/27/25

Sen. Rafferty and Rep. Murphy
Education and Cultural Affairs Committee
Cross Building Room 208
Augusta, ME 04333

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Billy Thompson and I am writing in opposition to LD 396 an “An Act to Provide for a Later Starting Time for High Schools.”

The issue of school start times is best left to the towns and local boards. As a school board member in Brunswick for the last 14 years, the issue of start times has come before the board on several occasions. We have discussed sleep and changing biology and weighed it against other family costs. In the end starting school later doesn't add an hour to the day. If we push the start back an hour, everything else in the day gets pushed an hour, practice, work, homework, bedtime and the hours for sleep remain the same while the costs to families, in childcare and wages, are disrupted. In deliberating on this issue, weighing the lack of actual sleep gained, against the impact this kind of change has on families the board has continued to maintain our current structure. To be clear the board has not taken a position on this bill and I am speaking for myself and not the board.

As a board member and a teacher I can assure you the impact this change would have on families is very real. With the high cost of childcare, families often depend on older siblings getting home to watch younger ones. This childcare is essential to the success of the family. Other families depend on the income working age students bring into their family and some students rely on their income to support themselves. Pushing back the start time will reduce the number of hours these students are able to work. I have multiple students that play these important roles within their families and the state imposing this change could have devastating effects..

Communities should be able to make these kinds of determinations themselves. Towns and school districts are not one size fits all and implementing a one size fits all mandate on start times doesn't serve the taxpayers who have elected officials already in place to make these decisions. Let towns and districts decide start times to ensure the needs of their community are met in a way that supports students and families.

Thank you.

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