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*Testimony of Representative Suzanne Salisbury in support of*  
**LD 39, An Act to Provide for a Later Starting Time for High  
Schools**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs*

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and other distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, I am Representative Suzanne Salisbury and I represent House District 128, which includes part of Westbrook. I am testifying in support of **LD 396, An Act to Provide for a Later Starting Time for High Schools**.

As I am sure you will hear many times today, having high schools start before 8:30 a.m. is detrimental to the physical and mental wellbeing of our students. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine recommends that “teenagers, ages 13 to 18, should regularly sleep 8 to 10 hours per night for good health. Students without enough sleep are more likely to suffer from symptoms of depression, perform poorly in school, and not engage in daily physical activity.”

As a society, we are experiencing a cultural shift that encourages adults to embrace “self-care” and to listen to our physical and mental health needs. However, we haven’t adapted to allow our teens to do the same. More and more students are tasked with balancing school, homework, athletics, extracurricular activities, and working a part time job. When things are busy and they have to juggle all of their responsibilities, something has to give. More often than not, students will sacrifice sleep in order to meet all of their other obligations. This is symptomatic of a structural issue that we can address as legislators: we can give high school students another hour of sleep at night by delaying school start times.

Mandating that Maine high schools start their days no earlier than 8:30 is a minor change that can have a huge impact on students. Let’s work together to reduce some of the burden on our young people by helping to set them up for a successful school experience.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

<https://sleepeducation.org/help-your-teen-recharge-sleep/>