

MAINE PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION



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TO: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

FROM: Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee

RE: In Opposition of LD 808: An Act to Require School Boards and Governing Bodies of Approved Private Schools to Implement Wearable Panic Alert Systems

DATE: March 13, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Dr. Holly Blair, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Principals' Association – Professional Division. The MPA represents more than 700 PreK-12 principals and assistant principals, CTE Directors and Assistant Directors, and Athletic Directors of public and private schools in Maine.

The MPA Legislative Committee is in opposition to LD 808, "An Act to Require School Boards and Governing Bodies of Approved Private Schools to Implement Wearable Panic Alert Systems."

While school safety is of the utmost importance, this bill creates an unnecessary state mandate that undermines Maine's long-standing tradition of local control in education. By including "school boards" in the language of the bill, LD 808 effectively applies to 100% of schools in Maine, making this a costly, unfunded state mandate that local communities would be forced to absorb.

Maine schools already have safety plans in place that are developed and implemented based on their individual community needs. These safety plans are tailored to the unique layouts, resources, and security measures of each school district. Requiring all schools to implement a specific wearable panic alert system disregards this local flexibility and imposes a one-size-fits-all solution that may not be the best fit for every district.

Additionally, the financial burden of this mandate is concerning. The cost of purchasing, maintaining, and training staff on these wearable panic alert systems would fall on local school budgets, which are already stretched thin. For many districts, particularly rural and underfunded schools, this could mean diverting critical resources away from educational programs, student services, or other safety measures that may be more effective for their specific needs.

Maine schools take student and staff safety seriously, and local communities should have the authority to determine the best approach to school security. LD 808 is an unnecessary mandate that adds financial strain without clear evidence that it is needed in every school across the state. We urge the committee to reject this bill and allow school districts to continue implementing security measures that best serve their students and staff.