

Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs in the Maine State Legislature

Chairperson Murphy, esteemed members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Paige Loud, and I am a social worker, future mother, and concerned citizen from Old Town. I am writing today to voice my strong opposition to LD 220, which would divert public funds to private schools and home-schooling through a voucher system. This bill is not about expanding opportunity but about undermining Maine's already underfunded public education system.

Public schools in Maine, especially our rural communities, are already struggling with limited resources, teacher shortages, and funding gaps. LD 220 would only make this worse by siphoning taxpayer dollars away from the schools that serve *all* students, regardless of ability, income, or background. Private schools and home-school programs are not held to the same accountability standards, nor are they required to serve students with disabilities or other specialized needs.

Furthermore, LD 220 would disproportionately harm northern and rural Maine students, where private school options are scarce or nonexistent. Unlike families in wealthier areas, many rural families do not have access to private schools or the means to supplement voucher funds. This bill would deepen educational inequities rather than solve them.

Instead of diverting funds, we should invest in strengthening our public schools, ensuring competitive teacher salaries, expanding special education services, and providing all students with the quality education they deserve.

I urge this committee to reject LD 220 and stand with Maine's students, families, and educators. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Paige Loud
Concerned Citizen