

Ashley Peterson

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TO: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

FROM: Ashley Peterson

RE: In Support of LD 696, An Act to Bolster the Maine Teacher Residency Program

DATE: March 11, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

My Name is Ashley Peterson, I am a first grade teacher at Jameson Elementary School in Old Orchard Beach and I am currently a mentor teacher for the Maine Teacher Residency Program. I am testifying in favor of LD 696 because I have seen firsthand the positive effects this program has had on my mentee as a future educator.

Preparing to become an educator is much like preparing to be a nurse or a doctor. When a nurse or doctor is in their residency training or clinical rounds they are in the field learning hands on from the professionals, in real time. This is important because they are not just reading about it and taking tests about it but are learning first hand. They are able to ask questions and face real life situations and learn how to deal with them while also applying what they have learned through coursework. The Maine Teacher Residency Program is just that. These mentees are in the classroom learning first hand exactly how we teach, plan, deal with student behavior, data collect, and much much more. Residents are able to learn what works, and what might not work for certain situations and certain students. Not only are they learning first hand, but in the Residency program they are in their placement at a school with a mentor teacher for a whole year. They are able to see the whole school year from start to finish. By having the mentees see the whole year they truly get to experience all parts of teaching, the highs, the lows and everything in between. I feel that our future educators will continue to come into the classroom more prepared, less anxious, more confident and more student centered because of this program. With this program in place hiring schools will benefit, teaching teams will benefit, but most importantly students will benefit. By Investing in the program we are investing in our future.

I urge you to support LD 696. Thank you for your time and consideration.