

Zachary Guidod: LD 696 MTR Testimony

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and other esteemed members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Zachary Guidod. I work at Lyman Moore Middle School in Portland as a Social Studies and ELA teacher. I live in South Portland. I am here today to testify in support of LD 696, an Act to Bolster the Maine Teacher Residency Project. Its passage is important to me for two key reasons.

First, as a new teacher who is furthering my education in graduate school, it has been incredibly valuable to me to have a mentor in my building. There is someone I can go to when I have questions or I need advice and I know that my fellow resident teachers feel the same. They are putting their time and energy into supporting resident teachers and they deserve to be compensated for the work they do.

Second, at a time when Maine is hemorrhaging teachers it is crucial to invest in the next generation of educators. As a lifelong Mainer I believe that the children in Maine deserve to be educated by the most qualified teachers possible. The \$3,500 stipend for tuition assistance provides much needed support to me and my fellow resident teachers to further our education so that we can be the best teachers possible for our students.

In addition, to continue my education in grad school it has been a necessity for me to have a paid residency position. I have taught both as a long term sub and a full time teacher on a conditional certificate. It would be impossible for me to take a year or even a semester without pay to become a certified teacher and I know that there are many others like me. The flexibility of the residency program allows me to work while earning my certification.

In conclusion, I urge you to support LD 696 and continue investing in the future of Maine's educators. The Maine Teacher Residency Project is an important program that strengthens the teaching profession. By providing critical support to resident teachers and their mentors, this bill helps build a stronger, more sustainable workforce in our schools.

Thank you, Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, for your time and consideration. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you today and for your commitment to Maine's students and educators.