

Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities



Testimony in Support of LD 696: An Act to Bolster the Maine Teacher Residency Program

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Gay Anne McDonald and I am the Executive Director for the Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities (MADSEC). MADSEC represents close to 300 administrators of special education and over 100 other special education professionals across the state in both public and private schools and Child Development Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the MADSEC Legislative Committee pursuant to LD 696: *An Act to Bolster the Maine Teacher Residency Program*. MADSEC strongly urges the Committee to vote 'ought to pass' LD 696. The Maine Teacher Residency Program is a vital initiative aimed at addressing the ongoing teacher shortage while ensuring that all Maine students, including those with disabilities, have access to highly qualified educators.

The passing of LD 696 provides a commitment to Maine's educational system through dedicated efforts in addressing the workforce challenges faced by school districts across the state. By providing aspiring teachers with hands-on experience, mentorship, and financial incentives, this program not only strengthens the teaching profession but also improves student outcomes across the state. MADSEC would recommend expanding the Teacher Residency Program across the University of Maine System to ensure broader access for individuals and students statewide. Doing so will create more opportunities for aspiring educators to gain practical experience while strengthening the capacity of schools across Maine to meet the needs of all learners.

Highly qualified teachers are essential to ensuring that all students receive the quality education they deserve. This is particularly true for students with disabilities, who rely on well-trained educators to provide specialized instruction, individualized supports, and inclusive learning environments. By investing in a robust teacher residency program, Maine can develop a sustainable pipeline of educators equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the diverse needs of all learners.

MADSEC strongly supports LD 696 and urges the Committee to advance this important legislation. We remain committed to working collaboratively and supporting initiatives that enhance teacher preparation, and professional learning and training which ultimately leads to highly qualified teachers educating Maine students.

Thank you for your time and dedication to Maine students and enhancing Maine's education system.

Respectfully,

Gay Anne McDonald

Executive Director

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