

Zoe Foster  
Rockland  
LD 895

My name is Zoe Foster and I am a fourth grade teacher at South Elementary School in Rockland (RSU 13). I am writing in support of Bill LD 895 as an educator and parent of two children who go to school in Maine. This year, I helped to start a program called "Forest Fridays" at our pre K -5 elementary school. Every Friday, rain or shine, our fourth graders travel to the woods behind our school to explore and learn. Our discoveries have led to many fascinating questions, insights and research, along with creative ideas and problem solving as they learn to collaborate and work together. We have spotted snakes, tracked coyotes, raccoons and fox, found birds nests and a beautiful praying mantis. Fourth graders regularly take nature walks with the pre-k and kindergarten students, helping them navigate uneven terrain and stay safe. Our students are engaged and excited in a way that we rarely see inside the classroom. They want to help the animals and plants around them and to take care of this wild space we have found together. I believe that all Maine students deserve a chance to learn in this way, and that schools and children will be stronger for having rich opportunities for outdoor learning. I thank the committee for their time and consideration of Bill LD 895.

With thanks,  
Zoë Foster