

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

L.D. 21

AN ACT TO UPDATE THE PROVISION OF LAW CONCERNING STUDENT CODES OF CONDUCT IN ORDER TO REFLECT BEST PRACTICES REGARDING BEHAVIORAL THREAT ASSESSMENT AND RESPONSE

March 13, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Noonan Murphy and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Eileen King, the deputy executive director for Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association in support of L.D. 21.

MSBA and MSSA appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of this legislation, which seeks to ensure that our schools are equipped with policies and procedures that align with best practices in behavioral threat assessment and response.

As school leaders, our primary responsibility is to provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all students and staff. Over the years, research and practice have demonstrated that effective behavioral threat assessment and intervention strategies can help identify students who may pose a risk of harm—whether to themselves or others—while ensuring they receive the necessary support and interventions to address underlying issues.

This bill updates the legal framework governing student codes of conduct to require the adoption of policies and procedures designed to assess and respond to potential threats of violence. By incorporating best practices, schools will be better positioned to take a proactive and systematic approach to identifying, assessing, and managing threats.

Currently the Maine Education Leaders Professional Learning Collaborative, representing MSBA, MSSA, MADSEC, MPA, MCLA and MeASBO is seeking grant funds to provide professional development from the Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) for staff in school districts across Maine. Currently there are multiple districts in Maine that utilize this student and staff safety program. Testimonials from these schools currently using CPI have seen great reductions in incidents of dangerous student behaviors.

Maine's schools are committed to fostering a safe and inclusive learning environment. By updating our student codes of conduct to incorporate best practices in behavioral threat assessment, we take a critical step toward enhancing school safety while ensuring that students in crisis receive the help they need.

I respectfully urge the committee to support this bill and advance it forward. Thank you for your time and consideration.