



Maine School Superintendents Association



## TESTIMONY NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST

L.D. 168

OFFICERS—2024-25

### AN ACT TO IMPROVE SAFETY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS BY REQUIRING SILENT ELECTRONIC NOTIFICATION SYSTEMS IN CLASSROOMS

March 13, 2025

PRESIDENT  
MARIA LIBBY  
MSAD 28/FIVE TOWN CSD  
CAMDEN, 04843

Senator Rafferty, Representative Noonan Murphy and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Eileen King, the executive director for the Maine School Superintendents Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committee of the Maine School Superintendents Association neither for nor against L.D. 168.

PRESIDENT-ELECT  
DR. ANDREW DOLLOFF  
YARMOUTH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT  
YARMOUTH, 04096

Ensuring the safety of every single student and staff member is the number one priority for our school leaders. Towards that goal, Maine districts have invested in many new safety initiatives, from building enhancements and notification systems to “badges” that staff can press to call for help.

VICE PRESIDENT  
RHONDA SPERREY  
RSU 64/MSAD 64  
CORINTH, 04427

We also work closely with local law enforcement to ensure appropriate procedures are in place to quickly respond to an emergency, protect our students and quickly notify families. Schools have detailed emergency protocols which are regularly updated through community collaboration. We support the use of any new technologies to complement these efforts and increase communication.

SECRETARY/TREASURER  
BENJAMIN SIROIS  
VALLEY UNIFIED REGIONAL  
SERVICE CENTER  
FORT KENT, 04743

However, our association has two primary concerns regarding the policy proposed in this bill. First, the legislation would seem to require every school to implement a very specific type of silent alert system. We have concerns about a law requiring such a narrowly defined solution, which could limit our local districts’ flexibility in choosing and purchasing a system that best meets the unique needs of their communities.

PAST PRESIDENT  
PATRICIA HOPKINS  
MSAD 11  
GARDINER, 04345

We also worry about the cost. Some estimates place the cost of implementing this system at upwards of \$8,000 per school, adding substantial expenses that are not covered through state assistance.

EILEEN E. KING  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This bill also requires that, in addition to notifying school personnel and law enforcement, the system “must automatically notify parents of students who subscribe to be notified” when it is activated. Communication with families during an emergency is of utmost importance to our schools, but we worry that this type of automatic notification could result in families overwhelming our phone lines or rushing to school buildings during the initial, critical moments when school personnel and law enforcement are responding to an emergency. This could potentially impede the work of our staff and law enforcement partners in protecting our children.

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Again, our school leaders support any tools to better protect our students, and many districts have already purchased their own notification systems towards that goal. Thank you for your time.

*Leading for equity, excellence and opportunity for all Maine Students*