

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO

L.D. 168

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Faye Anderson

RSU 22

PRESIDENT-ELECT

Joseph Long

MSAD 35/RSU 35

VICE PRESIDENT

Roy Gott

RSU 24

**IMMEDIATE PAST
PRESIDENT**

Jane Osborne

Deer Isle-Stonington CSD

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Steven W. Bailey

—————
**MAINE COUNCIL OF
SCHOOL BOARD
ATTORNEYS**

Isabel Ekman, Esq., Chair

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

March 13, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Noonan Murphy and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Steven Bailey, the executive director for the Maine School Boards Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committee of the Maine School Boards Association in opposition to L.D. 168.

While our association believes deeply in ensuring every student feels safe at school, we are opposed to this bill because we believe it would increase costs to local taxpayers and mandate implementation of a very specific notification program in every classroom across our state. We feel that local schools should have control in crafting systems that best protect their students.

Several tragedies in recent years have highlighted the unfortunate reality of gun violence in our schools. In Maine, every district takes this risk immensely seriously, and student safety is always our top priority. Many schools have added resource officers to serve as liaisons with local police departments, offering protection, safety and swift communication. Our administrators also frequently meet with law enforcement to update their safety and emergency protocols, ensuring that staff and students are well-protected.

While we encourage and welcome new approaches to enhance security, our association does not view this bill as a wise policy to implement in every Maine classroom. L.D. 168 would mandate a “silent electronic notification system” that would automatically notify 9-1-1, school security, local law enforcement and parents when manually activated in the event of a life-threatening or emergency situation. This bill appears to refer to a very narrow subset of notification systems that a district could purchase, providing our boards and administrators limited flexibility to choose the one that would work best for the needs of their school and community.

Moreover, we are deeply concerned at the substantial costs of this bill. While some Maine schools have already implemented silent notification systems, others have found the costs to be prohibitively expensive – estimated to be in the range of tens of thousands of dollars per district. We view this as an unfunded mandate that would fall on our local taxpayers, who we know cannot afford them.

We want our students and staff to be safe, but our policies should be crafted in a realistic, thought-out way that considers the needs and resources of our schools and communities. For these reasons, we urge you to oppose L.D. 168. Thank you.