

## TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO

### L.D. 112

### AN ACT TO PROMOTE OPPORTUNITIES BY ESTABLISHING A STUDENT WAGE

March 18, 2025

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and members of the Labor Committee, I am Steven Bailey, the executive director of Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and the Maine School Superintendents Association in opposition to L.D. 112: An Act to Promote Opportunities by Establishing a Student Wage.

We are deeply concerned about this proposal, and we worry that it is unfair to young people and would result in economic harm that could hurt some of our most vulnerable students and their families.

Every day, thousands of Maine students leave their classrooms, get in their cars, and head to work. Each summer, thousands more head to summer jobs, where they often make the minimum wage.

These jobs aren't just "learning experiences" for our children. The wages they make are often a necessity to help pay the bills and ensure their families have a roof over their heads. Cutting their wages in half – as this bill proposes to do – could mean losing out on hundreds of dollars per week. We know that many of our families are already struggling to keep up with the rising cost of living, and this bill would make their situation even worse.

Additionally, we feel this measure sends the wrong message to our young people. These students are performing the exact same duties as their older co-workers, and they should be paid the same wage for those services. Establishing a "student wage" teaches the wrong lesson, devalues their hard work, and could lead to less student motivation and engagement at their jobs.

For the well-being of both of our students and their families, we urge you to reject L.D. 112.

Thank you, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.