

Savannah Mirisola-Sullivan  
Portland  
LD 1089

Good morning Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, and honorable members of the Taxation Committee. My name is Savannah Mirisola-Sullivan from Portland, and I'm writing to you today in favor of LD LD 1089, an "Act to Permanently Fund 55 Percent of the State's Share of Education by Establishing a Tax on Incomes of More than \$1,000,000."

I've worked in public schools for the last eighteen years, and have been an elementary school teacher in Portland Public Schools for the last eight. This past year, I made the heartbreaking decision to step away from the classroom on a leave of absence to heal from burnout and chronic illness exacerbated by the enormous stress of classroom teaching during the pandemic.

Lack of funding to adequately staff our schools as well as a lack of resources directly contributed to my daily stress. As one small example, last year when I prepared my taxes, I saw that I spent over \$1,000 of my own income on classroom supplies- things like pencils, dry erase markers, picture books, snacks, clorox wipes, and post-it notes. I love my students deeply, and have dedicated my life to serving them, but cannot be responsible for funding my classroom on a salary that qualifies as "low income" in Portland, a salary which our current tax code treats the same as a millionaire.

A change in tax code would help retain great teachers at a time when teacher attrition is at a record high, and in turn benefit our students and families. States who have implemented a millionaire tax like California, New Jersey, and Massachusetts are seeing lower rates of teacher turnover. When we lift up teachers, we lift up students, and we lift up communities. The economic impact of investing in elementary education is profound- in the long term, we see reduced poverty rates, better health outcomes, and increased employment rates, all of which benefit Maine.

I urge you to please pass LD 1089 for my tireless colleagues, for all of our students, and for the health of our communities today and in the future. Thank you so much for your time and consideration.