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OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

March 26, 2025

Senator Joseph Rafferty, Chair
Representative Kelly Murphy, Chair
Joint Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Re: Testimony Opposing LD 607: A Threat to Educational Integrity and Local Community Control

Dear Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

I write in strong opposition to LD 607, which mandates that Superintendents approve agreements for students to attend schools outside their residency if the receiving school has capacity. This bill presents two major concerns.

LD 607 represents a deeply misguided legislative approach that would fundamentally undermine the delicate ecosystem of educational opportunity in Maine. This bill is not just problematic; it is a direct threat to the nuanced, personal approach to education that our state has long championed.

The Current System: A Model of Local Collaboration

Today, our superintendent system embodies the best of Maine's educational philosophy. When a student seeks to transfer between districts, current practices involve thoughtful, personalized conversations. Superintendents carefully consider the unique circumstances of each child, working collaboratively with home and receiving districts to determine the most appropriate educational placement. LD 607 would callously dismantle this carefully constructed, student-centered approach.

Resource Strain and Inequitable Burden

The practical implications of this bill are deeply concerning. Schools like those in Brunswick—known for high-performing educational environments—would be forced to absorb non-resident students with minimal additional funding. This is not just unfair; it is a potential recipe for educational deterioration.

Consider the cascading effects:

- Increased class sizes that dilute individual student attention
- Stretched resources that compromise educational quality
- Potential budgetary pressures that could lead to program cuts
- A disincentive for communities to invest deeply in their school systems

Impact on Sending and Receiving Districts

The bill creates a lose-lose scenario for school districts:

- Receiving districts face resource strain and potential quality degradation
- Sending districts risk curriculum narrowing and program elimination due to declining enrollment

Preserving Maine's Educational Philosophy

Maine has always prided itself on local control and personalized educational approaches. This bill represents a fundamental departure from those cherished principles. It transforms education from a carefully curated, community-driven experience to a transactional, one-size-fits-all model.

A Call to Protect Educational Integrity

Legislators, I urge you to recognize LD 607 for what it is: a misguided proposal that threatens:

- The personal nature of educational decision-making
- The financial sustainability of high-performing school districts
- The quality of educational experiences for all Maine students
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This bill is not just unfair—it is potentially destructive. I implore you to reject LD 607 and maintain the thoughtful, community-driven approach to education that makes Maine's school system unique.

Sincerely,



Phillip J. Potenziano, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools