

On behalf of the Council for Economic Education, I am pleased to support LD 1069. Research consistently shows that students who receive education in personal finance make better financial decisions. They have improved credit scores, reduced default rates, are more likely to have a credit file, and are less likely to have outstanding debt. In fact, three years after a state-mandated personal finance course was instituted in three states, severe delinquency on credit accounts or auto loans decreased by as much as 32 percent, while credit scores improved by as much as 5.2 percent. Students who choose to pursue postsecondary education make better borrowing decisions, choosing lower-interest loans and borrowing more knowledgeably. This effect is even more pronounced for students from low-to-moderate-income families.

When states embed personal finance into another course—as opposed to a standalone requirement—fewer than half of schools actually require personal finance content¹. Currently, only 15 percent of Maine students are in high schools that require a full semester personal finance course and 56 percent of students are in schools that do not even have a personal finance course². Given these facts, it is critical that you as legislators require a stand-alone personal finance course to ensure that all students receive this education.

Connecticut and New Hampshire have recently passed legislation requiring personal finance education in schools, further demonstrating the growing recognition of the importance of financial literacy. Just two weeks ago, Kentucky became the 22nd state to require a stand-alone personal finance course. Maine has the opportunity to follow suit by passing LD 1069, ensuring that our students have the knowledge and skills they need to make sound financial decisions as they move forward into adulthood.

By integrating this requirement into Maine’s educational framework, LD 1069 would be a crucial investment in Maine’s future. The Council for Economic Education, along with Maine-based organizations like Jump\$tart, are ready to provide resources and professional development to ensure the successful implementation of this bill. Nationwide at CEE, we provide training, tools, and resources – both online and in-person through over 180 affiliates – to more than 40,000 teachers annually, reaching over 4 million students each year with the highest quality economics and personal finance education. We are excited to be holding a professional development day in Portland this May!

Investing in financial education in schools will empower students from all backgrounds to achieve long-term financial success and prosperity. We strongly urge you to pass LD 1069, ensuring all students in the state have the opportunity to build a strong financial foundation for their future.

¹ <https://papers.carlyurban.com/Report2023.pdf>

² https://papers.carlyurban.com/state_standards_byStudents_2024.xlsx

Thank you for your consideration.