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Brunswick
LD 607

I am writing to urge the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee to strongly reject LD 607, which would require superintendents to approve superintendent agreements between districts. Although I currently serve on my local School Board as Vice Chair, I write representing only myself, having spent 15 years as a Maine public school teacher.

LD 607 is unquestionably about supporting the idea of School Choice, a proposal that has been deemed highly problematic by experts in public education for many years and for the following reasons:

1. School Choice exacerbates existing socioeconomic inequality; wealthier families who have the time, vehicles and gas to transport their students to another district can consider this option, while other families who lack those resources, cannot.
2. Fewer students in a district mean fewer state dollars, and thus struggling districts will become even weaker, as students abandon them and as funds are diverted to other, more "desirable" districts.
3. This also places a financial burden on the receiving district, putting more pressure on already strapped budgets, creating overcrowded classrooms and programs, and raising property taxes due to communities being forced to pay to educate students who are not residents.

LD 607 is a terrible idea. Superintendent agreements currently exist and are granted when appropriate, in circumstances where both school districts and a student benefits, per the superintendents' careful discretion and consideration. Removing the ability of superintendents to make those careful, informed decisions will weaken schools, further inequality, and place financial burden on all parties.