

GORHAM SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

Office of the Superintendent

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March 29, 2025

Senator Anne Carney, Chair
Representative Amy Kuhn, Chair
Committee on Judiciary
Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Re: Opposition to LD 1222

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

I write in strong opposition to LD 1222, which removes immunity under the Maine Tort Claims Act for School Superintendents, School Administrative Units or Schools within each SAU.

There are two major reasons for my opposition.

The first comes from my 20+ years of experience as a Superintendent of Schools in the State of Maine. This statute is unnecessary and unfairly targets schools for misconduct in a way that other public serving institutions are not. It is unnecessary because as a school Superintendent if I were to violate state or federal law, or fail to ensure safety of students in any way I would likely have my contract terminated by my school board, I would likely also lose my professional certificate and ability to earn a living in the state as well as possibly face criminal charges. Additionally, I could open up my district to devastating law suits. School Committee members can be removed by their electorate, and also possibly face criminal charges. Isn't that punishment enough for serious misconduct?

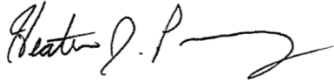
Secondly, I fear the significant impacts of this bill on the profession of Superintendent, or on the willingness of any volunteer in a community to take on the important role of School Committee/School Board member. Who would run for a public school board position understanding they could be putting their life savings, their homes, or other assets on the line if something goes wrong? Who would want to serve in the role of Superintendent knowing those same things? The pool of candidates for these positions

would become non-existent and our public school infrastructure would fail. Perhaps that is what this bill is seeking?

Why would public schools be singled out for this? Why not municipal officials? Legislators and others who work on the public's behalf? What is the intent behind this bill? If it is trying to hold Superintendents and School Boards accountable – I believe those rules already exist.

I urge you to vote NO on LD 1222. This is a bad bill for Maine's public schools and for Maine's communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heather J. P." followed by a stylized flourish.

Superintendent of Schools
Gorham School Department