



Testimony in Support of LD 607:

“An Act to Require the Approval of Superintendent Agreements Regarding Transfers of Students Between School Administrative Units”

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and the distinguished members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Harris Van Pate, and I serve as policy analyst for Maine Policy Institute. Maine Policy is a free market think tank, a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that advocates for individual liberty and economic freedom in Maine. We appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony in support of LD 607, “An Act to Require the Approval of Superintendent Agreements Regarding Transfers of Students Between School Administrative Units.”

The Bill’s Changes

LD 607 is a simple yet profoundly important bill. It ensures that if a student’s parent approves of a transfer and the receiving school administrative unit (SAU) has the physical and staffing capacity to accommodate the student, then both superintendents are required—not merely permitted—to approve the transfer. This represents a necessary correction to a system that currently gives administrators far too much unchecked discretion over where a student may attend school, often at the expense of families seeking a better fit for their child.

Maine Policy Institute strongly supports empowering families to make educational decisions based on what’s best for their children. Too often, bureaucratic inertia or inter-district politics prevent students from accessing the schools that best meet their individual needs. Under current law, even when parents and the receiving school agree, the sending superintendent can unilaterally block the transfer, even without a compelling reason. LD 607 corrects this imbalance by prioritizing student needs over administrative gatekeeping.

Public Support for more Public School Transfer options

According to nationwide polls, 68% of Americans, including three-in-four K-12 parents, support allowing students to transfer to any public school in their state regardless of residency status.¹ This support crosses racial, party, and socioeconomic lines, with polled people of every race supporting universality by at least 66%, both Democrats and Republicans supporting it by at least 70%, and at least 65% of people of every economic background supporting increased public school access.

¹ <https://yeseverykidfoundation.org/national-poll-reinforces-strong-support-for-education-freedom-policies/>



This bill does not institute universality but instead serves as a reasonable compromise between Maine's current educational system and a policy that has widespread public support. If a strengthened school transfer system is used more in Maine, it will serve as a helpful litmus test for the need for further school universality policies and school choice options.

Conclusion

This bill promotes educational freedom while preserving necessary limits. Transfers would still only be approved when there is clear capacity—both in physical space and staffing—so no district is overburdened. But if that standard is met and a parent seeks the change, the transfer must proceed. This ensures fairness, reduces arbitrary denials, and puts families—not bureaucrats—at the center of the decision.

LD 607 also complements the broader goals of public education reform: improving student outcomes, increasing district accountability, and encouraging innovation. When families have more freedom to choose schools, districts are motivated to serve students better, creating a continuous cycle of improvement.

We urge the committee to support LD 607. Maine families deserve an education system that works for them, not one that traps students in schools that may not meet their needs simply because of administrative reluctance. This bill upholds the rights of parents, respects local capacity, and eliminates unnecessary barriers to student success. Thank you for your time and consideration.