

Joey LeBlanc
Eddington
LD 577

Distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Joey LeBlanc; I live in Eddington and work as support staff at Lewis Libby School in Milford. I am testifying in support of LD 577, An Act to Address Student Hunger and Nutrition Through Expanded Access to Free Milk in Schools, with a proposed new title “An Act to Maximize Federal Funding and Protect Maine’s Universal School Meals Program.”

The school I work at, much like the school I attended myself in rural Maine, has a high level of need. The availability of free and reduced lunch is of obvious importance to so much of our community. It eases the burden on families and makes students healthier and more ready to learn. I work in Special Education, and see basically all of my students make use of the Universal School Meals Program every day. If we expect students to be able to meet the many demands placed on them, we need to be supporting them, in the very least, in meeting their basic needs.

Ensuring schools maximize federal funding and that schools be supported in full helps ensure a brighter future for our state and our nation by supporting our students today. Studies have shown that students provided food at school are more likely to be food secure and in good health, achieve better test scores, and are even less likely to be suspended. The benefits of universal food programs are clear and well-documented, which is why Maine has already been a national leader in providing this type of food program. We can continue to be a role model for other states. I urge you to support LD 577, An Act to Maximize Federal Funding and Protect Maine’s Universal School Meals Program.

Thank you very much for your time.