

Cassandra Kane
Bridgton
LD 577

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs: My name is Cassandra Kane, and I'm submitting testimony in support of LD 577 "An Act to Maximize Federal Funding and Protect Maine's Universal School Meals Program".

Multiple studies have shown that School Meals for All increases participation in school meals and reduces the stigma associated with receiving a "free lunch", making school meals a valued part of the school day for all students. Since the start of School Meals for All, Maine has seen a 25% increase in school meal participation; over 100,000 kids eat school meals every day; and in school year 2023/2024, over \$29M in meals were served to Maine students.

School meals save families an average of \$165 a month per child and help reduce stress and save time for busy families when they know their kids will be fed two meals at school.

We must put this bill's protections in place to make sure we can continue to feed Maine students.

Thank you for your attention and consideration,
Cassandra Kane