

Billie Watson  
Portland  
LD 577

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Billie Watson. I am the Youth Programs Director for Cultivating Community, a non profit that serves Portland public high schoolers in Cumberland County.

Today, I'm submitting testimony in support of LD 577 "An Act to Maximize Federal Funding and Protect Maine's Universal School Meals Program". Many thanks to Senator Tipping for his commitment to school meals in Maine.

I work with a population of students who are, have been, or could very easily experience food insecurity. Free school meals are relied upon heavily to meet their basic nutrition needs. If anything, we should be working to improve school meals, rather than weakening the current offerings. We cannot afford to make cuts to ending hunger. 1 in 5 kids in our state are food insecure. We are the most powerful country in the world. How can we justify leaving our children hungry?

Please support LD 577 and ensure our children's future.