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Freeport
LD 577

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is more than 80 years old, but it is pretty unambiguous in saying that nutrition is a key physiological need, meaning it is of the most basic that humans have. There is much discussion both in Maine and throughout the nation about improving student outcomes, but most legislation does not address these underlying factors like LD 577, which is why it is absolutely crucial that is maintained at all costs.

Childhood is a time of physical and mental development, but both of these can be stunted without adequate nutrition. As the son of a mother who was an educator and school administrator for more than three decades, I was aware that other kids did not get the same "three square meals a day" that I was fortunate to have.

In 2023-24, Maine served 29.7 million meals to school children — a staggering figure for a state of slightly more than 1 million. Digging deeper, this averages out to more than 100,000 meals per day of school, or more than 200 per day per public school, assuming 569 public schools per a quick Google search. Moreover, each meal provided food to someone who would have had difficulty attaining it otherwise. Sustaining school meal funding is therefore not a matter of charity, but rather necessity, if we are serious about doing the best for Maine kids.