



Testimony in Support of LD 919:

“An Act to Require Parental Permission for Certain Surveys and Questionnaires Administered to Minors in Schools”

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. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 919, “An Act to Require Parental Permission for Certain Surveys and Questionnaires Administered to Minors in Schools.”

LD 919 addresses a vital issue of parental rights and student privacy. Specifically, this bill ensures that no survey or questionnaire asking for or identifying a student’s full name may be administered to a minor without affirmative written parental consent. This common-sense reform brings Maine closer to the principles of informed consent and family autonomy that should undergird all public education policies.

As it stands, many school-administered surveys—particularly those concerning mental health, gender identity, sexual behavior, or personal family matters—are distributed with little or no parental oversight. Even if these surveys are well-intentioned, the sensitive nature of the information they request makes it imperative that parents are fully aware of what is being asked of their children and have the right to approve or decline participation.

LD 919 does not ban surveys or data collection—it simply requires that schools obtain a parent’s explicit consent before requesting personal information about their child in connection with their identity. This bill reinforces a foundational principle of education: that schools operate in partnership with parents, not in place of them.

This legislation also protects student privacy. In an age of growing concern over data security and third-party access to personal information, asking minors to disclose identifying information without robust safeguards and parental knowledge is unwise and risks violating students’ rights and eroding public trust.

Under federal law, namely the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA), parents have the right to inspect surveys administered to their children and opt them out of



surveys that probe into sensitive areas.¹ However, enforcement of PPRA has been uneven, and many parents are unaware of their rights. LD 919 goes further by establishing a state-level requirement for written parental consent, reinforcing federal protections and ensuring greater compliance.

Finally, this bill aligns with Maine Policy Institute’s longstanding belief that parents—not bureaucrats—are best positioned to make decisions regarding their children’s welfare and education. Requiring parental permission before a child’s identity is tied to sensitive survey responses is a modest but meaningful step toward reaffirming that principle.

We urge the committee to vote “Ought to Pass” on LD 919. This bill respects families, protects student privacy, and reinforces trust between schools and the communities they serve. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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[https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/faq/what-protection-pupil-rights-amendment-ppra#:~:text=File%20a%20Complaint-,What%20is%20the%20Protection%20of%20Pupil%20Rights%20Amendment%20\(PPRA\)?,financial%20assistance%20under%20such%20program\).](https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/faq/what-protection-pupil-rights-amendment-ppra#:~:text=File%20a%20Complaint-,What%20is%20the%20Protection%20of%20Pupil%20Rights%20Amendment%20(PPRA)?,financial%20assistance%20under%20such%20program).)