

MAINE PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION



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Opportunity Organization*

TO: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
FROM: Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee
**RE: In Opposition of LD 803: An Act to Address Certification
Violations for School Staff**
DATE: April 16, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Dr. Holly Blair, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Principals' Association – Professional Division. The MPA represents more than 700 PreK-12 principals and assistant principals, CTE Directors and Assistant Directors, and Athletic Directors of public and private schools in Maine.

The MPA Legislative Committee is in opposition LD 803. While ensuring that school staff are properly certified is important, this bill unfairly places the entire burden on school administrators and imposes excessive financial penalties that could further strain already struggling schools.

As written, LD 803 would require school administrators to be solely responsible for certification compliance, even when delays in the certification process often originate from the Maine Department of Education. The \$1,000-per-day fine is an extreme and unjust penalty that many schools simply cannot afford, especially when the certification process is frequently delayed due to bureaucratic inefficiencies rather than any fault of the schools themselves.

At a time when Maine is facing significant teacher shortages, this bill creates additional obstacles for schools trying to hire the educators they desperately need. Instead of punishing schools for circumstances beyond their control, efforts should focus on streamlining the certification process and ensuring that the Department of Education provides timely and efficient processing of certification applications.

If enacted, LD 803 would make it even more difficult for schools to recruit and retain qualified teachers, ultimately harming students and school communities. We urge the committee to reject this bill and instead work on solutions that support schools rather than penalize them.