

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Hannah Farrar, and I am a former Maine educator, coach, and community volunteer. I am writing this testimony in support of the presented bill. I grew up as the child of two dedicated educators in a rural part of the state where our schools were, and are, the heart of the community. As a student myself, I would volunteer my precious summers to help my father in our district summer school programs working with the elementary students. I saw first-hand how these students progressed both academically and socially.

In this area, many of these young students, and my own classmates, would look forward to being able to attend programs at the school because they were able to have a good meal, and be around the safety and care that the environment meant for them. As I became a teacher years later in the same district that raised me, I saw even more how crucial summer programming was to our young population. My middle schoolers and high schoolers alike depended on that time to get the support they needed to meet their level of achievement; for some it was maintaining until the fall, and for others, it was the finish line to receiving their diploma.

It's easy to live under the illusion that all of our students will spend their summers well-socialized, well-fed, and return to school in the fall, picking up where they left off, but sadly, that is not the reality for far too many of our students. It's our job as educators, decision-makers, and Mainers to look out for our future leaders, giving them all the tools and opportunities for success *now*, so they can flourish later on in life.

It is truly my hope that the state can work in conjunction with the federal government to provide our students with the services they need to succeed.

Sincerely,
Hannah Farrar