

Spencer Traylor
Lewiston
LD 1624

My name is Spencer Traylor, and I am a resident of Lewiston, Maine. I am the co-director of the nonprofit organization Samara Strategies, based in Lewiston, though I write to you today as an independent resident of the state.

I am writing to the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee in strong support of LD 1624 – An Act to Provide Funding for Summer School Programming.

I grew up in the small town of Milo, Maine, before attending Colby College and then moving to Lewiston to work in youth development and education. For the last decade, I have worked in afterschool programming, summer school, summer camp, and as a full-time educator in the Lewiston Public School system, teaching social studies, science, and special education. I have seen both the painful realities of educational decline due to ACEs, COVID-19, and the effects of technology, as well as the critical role that summer programming plays in a child's educational development. As a Special Education teacher in the Lewiston school system, I came to see how important consistency is in helping some of our most vulnerable youth build educational routines that set them up for success. Even a weekend or a short school break can be a significant disruption to a student's learning. A full summer without any educational programming can erase much of the social and academic progress a student has made over the course of a school year.

I have also seen how critical summer school can be for students who struggled to pass classes during the academic year and need extra time to earn their credits. I saw students fail to receive credit for a number of reasons (e.g., death in the family, stressors outside of their control, working to support their family, disruptions in their family support system, etc.). For these students, the summer was integral to their ability to slow down, focus on one credit at a time, and finally earn their high school diplomas. Without investment in summer learning, we would see not only a long-term degradation of educational standards in our younger students, but also a short-term decline in our graduation rates.

I hope it is clear that this is an incredibly important bill to pass. If we are serious about addressing poverty and promoting social and economic mobility, we must be willing to invest in our students' success throughout the full calendar year. I urge you to vote in favor of this bill to ensure that every student in Maine—regardless of income or background—has the support they need to succeed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Spencer Traylor
150 South Ave, Apt 2
Lewiston, ME 04240
714-595-8060
spencer.m.traylor@gmail.com