

Testimony in Support of LD 1495, "An Act to Make the Professional Standards Board Responsible for the Educator Certification Process"

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

My name is Grace Leavitt. I am writing this testimony as a retired educator with over 43 years of experience in the classroom, having taught at all levels, elementary through higher ed, though most years were as a high school Spanish teacher. I was National Board Certified for twenty of those years.

I was appointed to the Professional Standards Board when it was first established during the administration of Governor Baldacci. Once members were appointed, there were several meetings over the next few years which I attended. I was, however, somewhat disappointed when we learned that the PSB was not authorized to have responsibility over educator certification as I had expected. The discussions we had were very limited in scope, whereas the PSB in other states such as in Vermont and Delaware, to name just two, were responsible for the educator certification process. This made sense to me as the members of the PSB were, and are, practicing educators with a great deal of expertise and experience in the profession.

Subsequently Governor Paul LePage would not appoint anyone to the PSB, despite our calls for him to do so, and despite the statute calling for the PSB to continue. This was extremely concerning, as I'm sure you can imagine.

It was encouraging to have PSB reestablished following the end of his administration, and it is greatly encouraging to see LD 1495 now being proposed to have the PSB take on the responsibility which I believe it was originally intended to have in the initial discussions about it.

It is well past time for the practitioners in the profession to have a greater voice in these matters. Much has changed in education, especially recently, and those who are actively involved in our schools are in the best position to have this responsibility.

I urge the Committee to support this while also taking a careful look at the timeline for the transition to this.

Thank you for your hard work!

Grace Leavitt  
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