

Judith Jones  
Hope  
LD 1571

4/25/25 Testimony Against LD 1571

Good Morning, members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Judith Jones, of Hope, where we have had a Christmas tree and blueberry farm. I am here to testify against LD 1571, An Act to Modify Certification Standards for Full-time Teachers in Public Charter Schools and for Educational Technicians.

Today I bring decades of experience in public education policy development, research, mentoring and monitoring of efforts to enhance the ability of families to access high quality public education options. I supported the bi-partisan passage of the Maine enabling law for public chartered schools in 2011. That has resulted in new opportunities for families to choose public education programs that fit their children's needs.

So, what is the purpose of this bill? It takes direct aim at one of the key provisions that allow public charter schools in Maine to hire experienced teachers with specialized expertise. There is no data to suggest there is a need to restrict the hiring of such teachers within the current provisions of the law.

The only group that would benefit from the elimination of this flexibility are the organizations that charge for various certification courses.

Public charter schools have become an important part of America's modern public education system, and despite controversy and outright opposition, they continue to prove their value to children and are here to stay.

The National Education Association (NEA), affiliates like the Maine Education Association (MEA) and teacher unions in other states, have fought public charter schools persistently because this new kind of public school weakens the powerbase teacher unions have traditionally enjoyed within the public education system.

Maine's nine charter schools are unique public programs that are allowed the freedom to be innovative while being held accountable for expanding opportunities for students to improve their engagement and achievement. Maine's charter school program is now threatened to be hobbled by even more unnecessary rules. Maine's public charter school program has been well implemented and its flexible hiring deserves not only to be sustained, but also to be adopted by District school boards.