

MAINE PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION



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TO: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
FROM: Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee
RE: In Opposition of LD 1586: An Act to Amend the
Regional School Unit Budget Validation Referendum
Law
DATE: April 30, 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 Maine Principals' Association's Legislative Committee is opposed to LD 1586, An Act to Amend the Regional School Unit Budget Validation Referendum Law.

This bill would require that the total dollar amount of the proposed school budget be explicitly stated in the budget validation referendum question. While we understand the intent may be to increase transparency, we believe this approach introduces unnecessary risk and confusion. Including a large dollar figure in isolation—without context regarding fixed costs, state funding levels, or local obligations—can create a "shock factor" for voters, leading to decisions based more on optics than on the educational needs of the community.

It is important to note that proposed school budgets are already posted publicly and made accessible to all community members through meetings, hearings, and online publication. These processes provide ample opportunity for residents to review, question, and understand the full scope of the budget—including the dollar amount—before casting their vote.

For these reasons, we respectfully oppose LD 1586 and urge the Committee to vote Ought Not to Pass.

Please note that this testimony was submitted based off of the original bill and not additional amendments that may be presented.