

**Testimony in Support of LD 1579**  
**“An Act to Abolish School Budget Referenda”**

Good afternoon Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Scott Harriman, I live in Lewiston, and I am testifying **in support of** LD 1579, “An Act to Abolish School Budget Referenda.”

School budgets already undergo many levels of scrutiny. Here in Lewiston, the elected school committee members approve the details of the budget, the city councilors (who are elected by the same voters) approve the bottom-line dollar amount, and then a very small number of voters turn out and approve the budget at the ballot box. Interestingly, no other municipal department’s budget, nor the municipal budget as a whole, is mandated to be confirmed by a special election.

Mandatory school budget referenda needlessly waste taxpayer dollars and municipal staff time in order to conduct elections that usually receive very little interest from voters. Returning this policy decision to the local level will still allow school units to continue the referendum process if they wish, instead of being mandated to do so.

Also, if a significant percentage of voters is unhappy with their school budget — even after the numerous steps of a public process overseen by two groups of officials whom they have elected — then a petition can be circulated for a referendum vote to be held.

Please vote **Ought To Pass** on LD 1579. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

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