



Maine Education Association

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Testimony

In Opposition To

LD 1461: An Act to Prohibit School Boards from Implementing or Enforcing Mask Mandates

Jan Kosinski, Government Relations Director, Maine Education Association

Before the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee

April 30th, 2025

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

My name is Jan Kosinski, and I am the Director of Government Relations for the Maine Education Association (MEA). The MEA represents nearly 24,000 educators, including teachers and other educators in nearly every public school in the state, as well as full-time faculty and other professional and support staff in both the University of Maine and Community College systems. Thousands of retired educators continue their connection and advocacy work through the MEA- Retired program.

I offer this testimony today on behalf of the MEA in **OPPOSITION** to LD 1461, *An Act to Prohibit School Boards from Implementing or Enforcing Mask Mandates*.

We believe this bill is an overreaction to the COVID-related mask mandates that were instituted by the state and school boards during the frightening and unprecedented COVID pandemic.

Of course, in retrospect, we can all criticize the actions of our Governor, school board members and others who were in leadership roles during this time. We can all “Monday morning quarterback” the decisions that were made during that time and reach conclusions. We encourage an objective analysis to better understand what was done and why, but we believe leaders made the best decisions they could, under the circumstances and given the information they had at the time.

We are deeply worried this bill would enshrine in law a prohibition that we may need again. We cannot predict what the next pandemic will look like. COVID may mutate into something more virulent in the coming years. There may be another pandemic or catastrophe that may require masking to protect the safety and health of students. Just as no one predicted COVID, we cannot predict the next pandemic or public health crisis. Yet this bill attempts to prevent one tool, that could be helpful in the future. We urge the Committee to reject this proposal.

Thank you for your service and please reach out if I can help with any questions or concerns.

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