

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 Kimberly Jalbert, I live in Lewiston, and I am testifying in opposition of LD 1579, “An Act to Abolish School Budget Referenda.”

As a resident of Lewiston I find that the School Board and the City Council do little to inform the residents when the vote for the budget will be. This is what causes the low attendance. If the Council were to send notices by mail, I feel more voter turnout would be better.

The last voter turnout, where the budget was approved, only had a higher turnout because the Superintendent of the School District sent out an email blast telling parents that the after-school programs would be discontinued if the budget was not approved.

Lewiston is a poor district, and we cannot afford to let the Schools or School Board inflate their budget with all of their wishful thinking, adding additional positions when they can't fill the position they already have unfulfilled. We have a lot of elderly residents that will be pushed out of their homes because they will not be able to afford the taxes because the school budget always has significant increases every year.

I ask you to please vote ought not to pass on LD 1579.

Kimberly Jalbert

Lewiston, ME