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Testimony of Debra McIntyre, Executive Director, on behalf of the members of the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association, testifying in opposition to LD 1639 An Act to Codify Minimum Instructional Hours in the State's Schools.

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Debra McIntyre, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association. On behalf of the members of MCLA, I offer testimony in opposition to LD 1639 An Act to Codify Minimum Instructional Hours in the State's Schools.

While we appreciate the intent to ensure adequate instructional time for students, we believe this bill may lead to several unintended consequences that would ultimately hinder—rather than enhance—educational outcomes across the state.

First, codifying minimum instructional hours could conflict with existing contract language negotiated by school districts and educators, potentially leading to costly and time-consuming renegotiations. In rural districts, where staggered bus schedules are often necessary due to long travel distances and limited transportation, rigid instructional time requirements may create additional logistical challenges that disproportionately affect these communities.

Second, LD 1639 places an undue emphasis on “seat time” as a measure of educational quality. In doing so, it overlooks far more critical indicators of student success—namely, the quality of instruction and student engagement. Simply mandating more hours in school does not guarantee improved outcomes, particularly if those hours are not used effectively or if students are not present to benefit from them. Attendance, instructional quality, and curriculum design are central to meaningful learning.

In conclusion, while we share the goal of improving student achievement, we believe LD 1639 addresses the wrong problem and risks creating more harm than benefit. For these reasons we are opposed to LD 1639.