



Testimony in Support of LD 1588:

“An Act to Ensure Transparency in Student Transfer Requests”

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and the distinguished members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Jacob Posik, I live in Saco, and I represent Maine Civic Action and Maine Policy Institute. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of LD 1588, “An Act to Ensure Transparency in Student Transfer Requests.”

At its core, LD 1588 is a transparency measure that recognizes the importance of empowering parents and students with accurate, accessible information about the process and outcomes of public school transfer requests. The bill would require school administrative units (SAUs) to report annually to the Commissioner of Education the number of student transfer requests received, granted, and denied, along with written rationales for any denials. The commissioner would, in turn, publish a de-identified version of this data on the Department of Education’s website.

This bill promotes good governance, accountability, and, most importantly, trust in the public education system. In a state where educational options are mostly limited by geography and rigid district lines, parents deserve to understand how decisions regarding transfer requests are made, particularly when these decisions may significantly impact their child’s academic trajectory.

Transparency Enhances Equity and Informed Decision-Making

The need for greater transparency in education is well established. Families should not have to navigate opaque systems or endure arbitrary decisions without recourse or explanation. When denial rationales are disclosed publicly in a de-identified format, it allows policymakers, advocates, and the public to identify patterns of unfairness or inconsistency that may otherwise go unnoticed. This can be particularly important for rural families or those seeking better opportunities outside of chronically underperforming school districts.

Furthermore, this information may reveal where demand for alternative educational options is high—insight that can help inform long-term solutions, such as public



school open enrollment policies or expanding school choice initiatives, including access to charter schools.

Accountability Without Bureaucratic Overreach

Crucially, LD 1588 does not interfere with the decision-making autonomy of SAUs. It merely asks that those decisions be documented and reported transparently. This is not an undue burden; it is a minimal expectation in a public system funded by taxpayers and serving all students with diverse needs and circumstances.

Public Confidence Demands Public Oversight

Across the nation and here in Maine, parents are increasingly concerned with how educational decisions are made. Whether the issue is curriculum content, disciplinary procedures, or enrollment decisions, the consistent demand from families is for a more open and responsive system. LD 1588 answers that call without expanding government or adding regulatory red tape.

For these reasons, the Maine Civic Action and Maine Policy Institute respectfully urge the committee to vote “Ought to Pass” on LD 1588. Transparency is a cornerstone of liberty, and in the context of public education, it is essential to ensuring all students, regardless of ZIP code, have access to opportunity and fairness. Thank you for your time and consideration.