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TO: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
FROM: Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee
RE: In Opposition of LD 1760: An Act to Promote Public Education in Maine by Amending the Laws Governing Student Transfers
DATE: May 6, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Dr. Holly Blair, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Principals' Association – Professional Division. The MPA represents more than 700 PreK-12 principals and assistant principals, CTE Directors and Assistant Directors, and Athletic Directors of public and private schools in Maine.

The Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee respectfully opposes LD 1760.

Maine currently has a well-established and effective process for student transfers through the superintendent's agreement. This process ensures that transfer requests are considered thoughtfully, with the best interests of the student, the receiving school, and the sending school in mind. LD 1760 would fundamentally alter this system by allowing parents to choose any school for their child to attend—as long as there is perceived capacity—without the need for a superintendent's agreement.

In addition to undermining this carefully balanced process, LD 1760 would significantly impact the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act. Maine already has rules in place to ensure the protection and support of our most at-risk students under McKinney-Vento. Allowing the Commissioner of Education to create new rules outside of this established framework could inadvertently harm the very students the Act is designed to protect.

If a transfer request is denied, LD 1760 requires the Commissioner to review the denial and publicly post all transfer requests—both approved and denied—along with the reasons for each denial. This not only creates a substantial and unnecessary administrative burden but also raises serious concerns regarding student and family privacy.

Further, the bill removes the annual review process currently conducted by superintendents, which allows for individualized assessments based on the student's best interests. Stripping away this professional discretion undermines the ability of school leaders to make informed, case-by-case decisions that prioritize student welfare.

Additionally, LD 1760 imposes a monthly reporting requirement on all schools to declare available capacity by grade level. This new administrative task would further burden schools, detracting from their primary focus on student learning and support.

In short, LD 1760 is not in the best interest of school districts, individual schools, or students. Maine already has a functional and successful process for handling transfer requests, and there is no demonstrated need to dismantle a system that is working effectively.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 1760.

Please note that this testimony was submitted based off of the original bill and not additional amendments that may be presented.