

TESTIMONY NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST

L.D. 1887

RESOLVE, TO IMPROVE AIR QUALITY AND VENTILATION IN NEWLY CONSTRUCTED SCHOOLS

May 9, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Noonan Murphy, and members of the Joint Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, I am Robbie Feinberg, the director of communications and government relations of the Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and the Maine School Superintendents Association neither for nor against L.D. 1887, Resolve, To Improve Air Quality and Ventilation in Newly Constructed Schools.

This bill makes important changes to a law passed four years ago and allows Maine to continue to prioritize air quality and ventilation while not overwhelming our schools with additional costs. That law, L.D. 705, required the state Department of Education to adopt rules to “require standards governing air quality and ventilation for all public schools, including schools with mechanical and nonmechanical ventilation systems.”

When this law passed, it was flagged as an unfunded mandate, with the [fiscal note](#) for the bill noting that “To the extent that the newly defined standards require some schools to upgrade their existing systems or install new systems, expenditure of local revenue may be required.” This recognizes that while Maine school leaders believe deeply in ensuring students and staff are in safe, healthy buildings, state funding must be provided to assist in this work.

L.D. 1887 recognizes the substantial cost of such a mandate on school districts and instead limits this mandate to newly constructed schools beginning in 2026.

Schools across Maine continue to take meaningful steps to improve air quality and ventilation, and many used federal COVID relief funds to specifically install new HVAC systems and invest in systems to improve ventilation within their existing school buildings.

Maine schools will continue to take steps to improve air quality. One important way for the state to achieve this goal is to provide more funds to renovate and/or build new schools. More resources used in this way will allow our state to truly provide an equitable, safe education to every student across Maine.