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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

Neither For Nor Against

LD 849 – An Act To Establish A Recall Process For Public School Board Members

January 8, 2026

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury and members of the State and Local Government Committee, my name is Rebecca Lambert, and I am testifying neither for nor against LD 849 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association's (MMA) elected 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC). For reference, the LPC guides MMA's advocacy efforts and establishes positions on bills of municipal interest.

School board members have an important role in local education governance in that they are policy setting bodies, fiduciaries of public resources, and stewards of the educational environment. From an accountability perspective, recall provisions may be used as a means of voter oversight between election cycles, particularly in cases of alleged misconduct or loss of public confidence. Even when rarely invoked, the existence of these policies can reinforce transparency and ethical responsibility. However, school boards are already subject to multiple accountability mechanisms, including regular elections, open meeting requirements, and ethics rules.

Stability is an equally important consideration for school boards. Board decisions at times require implementation over multiple years, in areas such as budgeting, labor relations, and in the process of assessing and evaluating the superintendent's performance. Instituting a recall process, especially one with too easily triggered thresholds, could incentivize short-term decision-making, increase political discourse, or worse yet, discouraging residents from running for office. Even unsuccessful recall efforts may consume significant time and resources, diverting attention from educational priorities.

Finally, in a state where local decision making is paramount, school board member accountability must remain in the hands of local voters and not the state. For these reasons the LPC is neither for nor against LD 849. Thank you for your time and for considering the municipal perspective on this issue.



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