

TESTIMONY NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST

L.D. 2008

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FUNDING TO THE MAINE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS AND CLARIFY SENDING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT OBLIGATIONS

January 29, 2026

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, I am Robbie Feinberg, Director of Communications and Government Relations for Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association regarding L.D. 2008, An Act to Provide Funding to the Maine School of Science and Mathematics and Clarify Sending School Administrative Unit Obligations.

Maine's school leaders recognize the important role that MSSM plays as Maine's only public magnet school, providing opportunities for students to be challenged academically and pursue their varied interests. MSSM operates differently than the rest of Maine's public education system with its admissions structure and residential model, and we respect that it offers a unique atmosphere that has benefited Maine students and families.

Our associations also recognize what could be perceived as a current inequity in Maine law:

- If a student from a district without its own high school sought to attend a local private or independent school, the district would be required to pay a portion of the tuition cost
- However, if that same student chose to attend MSSM, MSSM would not receive that same tuition payment

This bill seeks to address that seeming inequity, and our associations respect the bill's attempt to resolve it.

Our only concerns regarding this bill are the uncertain financial impact that it could place on certain Maine districts. Many Maine communities already help to pay for a student's room and board if they attend MSSM, but they are not required in law. This bill would mandate it and potentially add new costs onto certain districts at a time when schools across Maine face challenging budget pictures.

L.D. 2008 also creates different monetary obligations for a school district, depending upon whether or not the district has its own high school. Only particular districts – those that do not operate or contract with a secondary school – would have this new monetary obligation, potentially raising questions of fairness and equity.

Because of these questions, our associations are neither for nor against this bill.