

Monday, February 23rd, 2026

Chairpersons Rafferty and Murphy, and other members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

My name is Luke Jensen. I am a resident of Lewiston, and a current member of Lewiston's School Committee (although I speak only for myself with this testimony). I have worked most of the past ten school years in Lewiston/Auburn schools, three as an elementary school teacher.

This testimony is in favor of LD 2192, An Act to Protect Students by Ensuring Schools Have Complete Information About School Employees and Applicants for Employment.

To put it plainly: vulnerabilities in our school safety systems have been exposed, and require action to fix. This bill helps in that process.

Most people assume that since all school employees are required to pass a background check, that all school employees have been properly vetted.

Most people also assume that if an allegation of sexual harassment is made against a school employee, that the allegation is fixed to a permanent record that districts could view when deciding whether or not to hire that employee in their own district.

Those people are wrong, unfortunately.

As a school committee member, I know that we on the board have the final vote on approving new hires/transfers in the district. It is a process that school committee members everywhere take seriously. We assume that a strong vetting process has occurred by Human Resources and hiring committees. We assume there are effective safeguards in place.

The reality is that those safeguards don't allow districts to cover everything that needs to be covered.

The scenario of a school employee engaging in misconduct, resigning prior to getting fired, then getting a job in another district is unfortunately very real. Our current safeguards do not prevent this from happening.

A bill such as LD 2192 would make a huge difference in closing those gaps by enabling districts to communicate information critical for making proper hiring decisions. It would strengthen the system especially by ensuring investigations are completed, and then monitored by the Department of Education.

The safety of our state's children and public school employees should always be prioritized. LD 2192 is a common-sense way to put them first and create the safeguards that people already think exist.

Again, I urge support for this bill. Thank you.

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