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Testimony of Rep. Julie McCabe in support of
LD 2192, An Act to Protect Students by Ensuring Schools Have Complete Information About School Employees and Applicants for Employment
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Good afternoon, Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and esteemed members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. My name is Julie McCabe and I represent House District 93, which is part of Lewiston. I'm here today to testify in support of LD 2192, **An Act to Protect Students by Ensuring Schools Have Complete Information About School Employees and Applicants for Employment**.

As a teacher, I understand how vulnerable young people are and how important it is to keep our students safe. This bill helps reinforce school safety standards by requiring that the Department of Education, as well as schools, strengthen their processes when vetting job applicants for vacant positions. By necessitating that applicants provide education-based employment history as well as employment that involves direct contact with children, schools will be able to properly vet them by contacting past employers and gathering more information on the applicant.

Another important aspect of this bill is holding those accountable who provide false information or fail to disclose relevant information, such as past instances of misconduct or an investigation by an employer, a state licensing agency or law enforcement. Getting a feel for a potential employee is critical in any industry, but it's especially crucial when hiring for a position that interacts with children and teenagers on a daily basis. Knowing if an applicant engaged in past conduct that was harmful or illegal is pivotal in the hiring process, and this bill clarifies that candidates sharing that information is paramount.

Children spend most of their waking hours in school and are heavily influenced by the teachers and other staff members around them. Schools must be a safe place for children to thrive and we must be vigilant as to who we're hiring to lead our classrooms. As legislators, we must do everything in our power to ensure students are in the hands of high quality educators who have been vetted through a hiring process that holds all stakeholders accountable.

Thank you for your time and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.