

Testimony for LD 2175 HP 1463

Resolve, regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 11t: The Credentialing of Education Personnel, A Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Education, State Board of Education.

In Opposition to Changes

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.

My name is Rose Marie Angell, PhD. I am a retired public-school educator and former faculty at St. Joseph's College in the physical education teacher education program, and current working as part-time faculty for UMaine, teaching graduate level adapted physical education courses.

I am opposed to LD 2175 HP 1463 for these reasons:

- **Not an emergency and requires more discussion:** A teacher shortage at all levels (Pre-K to Colleges) should not be the primary reason for this emergency legislation. The cause of the teacher shortage should be the focus. Reducing teacher credentials and including a new pathway to teacher endorsements does little to serve Maine school age children. Maine is 44th among states in education, which should be no surprise as the Maine DOE has been virtually (no pun intended) absent.
- Reducing or removing or not identifying the professional teaching standards via coursework affects most significantly the children in Maine who access Pre-K-12 education. It also effects Maine Colleges and Universities as now the path to licensure is a-la-cart, with missing academic coursework critical to quality teaching.

The Depart of Education collects little data as to who exactly is teaching in our school. Their focus is on background checks, important to ensure safety, but does little to ensure the quality of teachers in our school. Since the removal of "*No Child Left Behind*", requiring that all teachers be highly qualified, Maine has dropped to 44th among all 50 states in education. That should alarm all of us!

Taxpayers should be informed whether a teacher is qualified, not through Maine licensure, which used to be a trusted source, but through the degree the person earned.

- **High quality teachers or expert teachers have subject matter knowledge** aligned with professional standards and this document does not include professional standards for:
 - physical education,
 - health education,
 - health education and physical education dual endorsement
 - proposed special education and classroom teacher endorsement.

In my adapted physical education courses, I see teachers leaving the classroom for teaching physical education. This matter is not good news for physical education and teacher shortages. I have had elementary teachers, high school teachers and special education teachers are pursuing licensure in physical education, through a-la-carte courses.

Those licensed through alternative pathways have difficulty meeting the needs of all students in their physical education classroom. According to researchers, teachers may only be reaching 1/3 of the students due to their limited knowledge of the learner and teaching methods. Documents were provided to the State Board of Higher Education and Certification Committee the list of courses Colleges and Universities

in Maine have chosen to align with national standards for teaching physical education and health education? The effect has also been felt in that teachers with alternate pathways have fewer connects with the States professional organizations and attend fewer conferences where professional development is delivered.

Regarding health education: Health teachers, taking time from their schoolwork day, some in classes and study halls, presented their concerns to the State Board of Education Higher Education Committee. Their concerns indicated the major concerns they deal with daily, some with students and some with individuals who have pursued the HE/PE endorsement. Simply, not enough coursework and difficulty in mentoring individuals who truly don't understand the mission of teaching physical education and health education.

Individuals have insufficient knowledge in many of the 10 [InTASC](#) standards for the development of quality teachers and which serves as the basis for teacher evaluations.

Are the Maine DOE and Education and Cultural Affairs Committee members willing to lower teacher standards to put less qualified teachers in our schools and accept that Maine is 44th among states and might move to a lower standard?

Special Education: IDEA requires that special education teachers are highly qualified, hence why under the emergency certification, just not anyone could be hired to teach special education.

I fully support inclusion, where students with disabilities are educated with general education peers. Unfortunately, the infrastructure has simply not been built. School administrators do not understand the work that has to be done within their schools to make inclusion for greater numbers of students with disabilities included in general education classes with their peers. Inclusion will only be possible if the teacher has sufficient knowledge of the learner, the content, and instructional strategies.

After 50 years of PL-94-142 leading to the current IDEA, physical education has been part of the definition for special education. Most Maine schools are in non-compliance with this Federal statute, which is under the supervision of Superintendents across the State. Maine DOE will rule on complaints for the one parent whose child is not being provided FAPE, leaving behind the other students who are not.

Does every parent have to fight for FAPE for their child with a disability? Or are Superintendents and the MDOE responsible for ensuring all children with a disability obtain FAPE?

- **Portfolios:** I believe that there are already sufficient pathways to earning an educator's license. Portfolios would be best utilized via the conditional certification, not a pathway for immediate licensure.

We have the following pathways to licensure: emergency, conditional, pathways 1 and 2 and sometimes 3 and yet Superintendents feel licensure is stifling their ability to hire teachers. Chapter 115 was created to ensure that teachers, quality teachers are working in Maine schools. Prior to 2020, Maine was listed higher in educational standards, then 44th among states. Perhaps the reason was we had an active Maine

DOE, and solid teacher licensure. The changes made to Chapter 115 in 2022, and this revision is cause for alarm. Superintendents are already helping teachers apply for emergency certifications or hiring teachers with conditional licensure.

- **Chapter 115 and the Maine Department of Certification** are not in sync. This problem has been noted through the last reiteration of Chapter 115. Now people are earning licenses with fewer courses and courses that are similar.
 - I have a BS, M.Ed., and a PhD in physical education and exercise science, and coursework in administration and special education. I have taught physical education and adapted physical education for 34 years and years as part-time faculty. I was denied endorsements that I have held for decades, despite completing all the coursework required. Why? These difficulties were not mine alone. It is easier to achieve a teacher endorsement with few courses than it is if one has completed a program of study!
- **Licensing of Education personnel is a forever business**, meaning that once one earns a license, there should be minor changes in coursework that a teacher must go through to maintain their licenses. Low quality teachers will hold a teaching license for a long time. We saw this in the 70's and it took years to retire ineffective teachers. Low quality teachers do not pursue membership in their Maine and or national professional organizations, and do not pursue quality coursework for renewal, but gather low quality online hours or their school's professional development which is not robust in all subject areas.

The impact of these proposed changes, including the portfolio option is going to affect programs in Maine that offer teacher preparation programs. I urge you to reconsider the effects of Chapter 115 when removing professional teacher standards for our students in Maine.

- **Higher Education – Teacher Education Programs:** Finally, has anyone considered the effect that Chapter 115 has on higher education – teacher education preparation programs? Removing course work not aligned with professional standards makes the

teacher preparation work more al-a-cart. This leads to the instability of higher education teacher education programs. Once these programs are gone, they may not come back; coursework aligned to the InTASC standards will not come back. Quality faculty will not come back! Will quality public school teachers in Maine, ever come back?

Thank you for your time.

Rose Marie R. Angell, PhD
Whitefield, Maine