

Damon Yakovleff  
Portland  
LD 2226

Distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

Our family is writing in strong support of LD2226, “An Act to Amend the Essential Programs and Services School Funding Formula”. We believe this bill goes a long way toward improving a system that does not adequately support communities, like our home of Portland, which have a high proportion of lower income students.

Our community has seen a huge increase in housing costs and associated property valuations (on paper, at least) which have grossly outpaced income growth. Our family of four consists of two public sector workers and two children. Our household income is just about the median. We have seen our property taxes dramatically increase due to revaluations and increased costs, primarily to support public education. From 2025 to 2026, we saw a \$200 per month increase in monthly mortgage payment due to tax increases from recent property revaluations.

To be clear: Our family is glad to do our part to adequately fund schools. But the current formula means that our family proportionally is asked to do more than those in places with a greater ability to pay and fewer needs because the formula does not take income disparity into account.

LD2226 will go a long way toward fixing the unfairness in the way we currently fund education in our state. By taking income into account, state support will increase where it will be most needed. Taking regional cost of living factors into account is also overdue and a needed change. Finally, the improvements in calculations for transportation and special education needs are another much needed improvement to equity that we strongly support.

Another important consideration is that state policies should not be made in isolation to each other. The legislature has recently passed laws that require communities to change their zoning to allow more affordable housing to be built. Adding more affordable housing in more communities is an important goal, and these reforms are sorely needed. We should recognize, however, that communities adding more housing for lower income workers do have concerns about sustainable school funding. The proposed change to the school funding formula is a great way to support communities to meet this policy objective.

Could LD2226 go further in promoting equity? Perhaps, and if the Legislature supports this, we are all for it. But please consider, at minimum, putting the changes outlined in LD2226 into place. The changes to the formula are strongly supported by research found in the legislative report directed by LD318.

Thank you all for your time and attention to improving public education in the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

Damon Yakovleff  
Nicole Anderson  
Bolton St.  
Portland, Maine