

Maine Education Association

Grace Leavitt President | Jesse Hargrove Vice President | Beth French Treasurer
Rebecca Cole NEA Director | Rachelle Bristol Executive Director

Testimony

Neither For Nor Against

LD 258: An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of the State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025

John Kosinski, Government Relations Director, Maine Education Association

Before the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee and the Taxation Committee

February 7, 2023

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs and other esteemed members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee,

Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry and other esteemed members of the Taxation Committee,

My name is John Kosinski (he/him) and I am proud to serve as the Director of Government Relations for the Maine Education Association (MEA). The MEA represents 24,000 educators in the state of Maine, including teachers and other professionals in nearly every public school in the state and faculty and other professional staff in the University of Maine and Community College Systems.

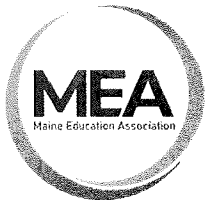
I am here to testify neither for nor against the Property Tax Stabilization provisions called for in LD 258, An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025.

We certainly appreciate the Governor's proposal sets aside \$15 million in fiscal year 23/24 and an additional \$31 million in fiscal year 24/25. But we are deeply concerned this may not represent sufficient funding for the program, and we are deeply concerned about the long-term impact of the Property Tax Stabilization program on funding for local public schools.

This new program is a result of LD 290, An Act To Stabilize Property Taxes for Individuals 65 Years of Age or Older Who Own a Homestead for at Least 10 Years, passed last session. The bill had a public hearing in May of 2021. In June of 2021 the bill was passed by the House and the Senate and sent to the Special Appropriations table and carried over. Nearly a year later, in April of 2022, the bill was removed from the Special Appropriations Table and passed on the same day by the House and Senate and sent to the Governor where it became law.

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Program now and into the future, although we would argue that a better, more targeted approach to this issue is warranted.

Thank you for your time and attention and I will do my best to answer any questions you may have.

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