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*Testimony of Representative Margaret Craven introducing
LD 156, An Act to Require Outdoor Recess Time for Students from Grade 6 to 8
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education*

Sen. Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Honorable Members of Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Margaret Craven, and I represent House District 93, which is part of Lewiston. I am here today, to present **LD 156, An Act to Require Outdoor Recess Time for Students from Grade 6 to 8**.

Most middle school students are at school for over 7 ½ hours. It is essential for them to have some freedom to do what they'd like to do, to get some fresh air, to have some down time to reduce stress, or organize their thoughts.

Children are more attentive and productive in the classroom after recess, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics policy statement on "The Crucial Role of Recess in School." The results seem to be the same, no matter how their free time was spent. The age group we are referencing here find it difficult to stay seated for hours at a time, and going outdoors would help release some pent-up energy.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics:

"While the time spent at recess is shorter in middle school, the recess provides unstructured time for students to socialize. Since the play is child-led, the children practice negotiation in setting the rules for play, cooperation, sharing and problem solving. The social arena changes in middle school as children go through puberty and deal with feelings of self-consciousness and a greater need for peer acceptance. Recess gives young adolescents extra time to work out social issues with friends and enemies. Periodic breaks have the same optimizing effects on the brain."

Here today we have experts that will tell you what children need in order to do well in school. I am so proud of the students that took the time to write testimony and come to Augusta to exercise their rights to have input in their government and their education.

Thank you for your attention, and I would be happy to answer any questions but would rather leave it to the experts and professionals coming behind me.