



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

## **Rebecca Millett**

50 Market St., Ste 1A PMB 162  
South Portland, ME 04106  
Residence: (207) 415-3770  
[Rebecca.Millett@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:Rebecca.Millett@legislature.maine.gov)

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*Testimony of Rep. Rebecca Millett presenting*

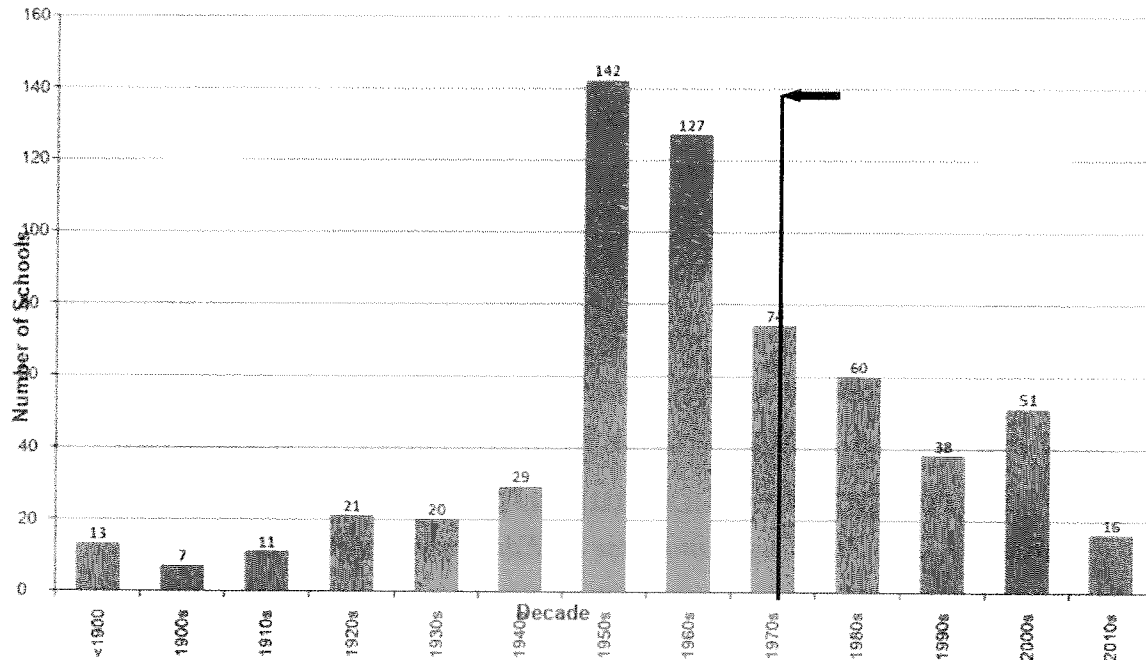
**LD 280, An Act to Make Maine Schools Safer and Healthier by  
Increasing the Maximum Debt Service Limit  
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs**

Good afternoon, Sen. Rafferty, Rep. Brennan and esteemed colleagues of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Rebecca Millett and I represent House District 123, most of Cape Elizabeth. I am before you today to present for your consideration LD 280, An Act to Make Maine Schools Safer and Healthier by Increasing the Maximum Debt Service Limit.

This bill changes the maximum debt service limit for school capital improvements for fiscal year 2024 to fiscal year 2027 from \$150,000,000 to \$250,000,000.

The last rating cycle (2017/2018) for major school construction resulted in 74 projects qualifying and only seven projects receiving approval due to the lack of funding capacity. These lists are attached for your reference. We are all too familiar with stories of schools with leaking roofs, mold, non-mechanical ventilation, lengthy reliance on portable modular classrooms, no sprinkler systems, and so on. In addition, too many of our children attend schools with facilities that are ill equipped for providing access to the 21st century technology and experiences they need to compete in a global economy.

# Construction of Active Maine Schools by Decade -Original Construction



Source: MDOE School Facilities Inventory Report: 20-A.M.R.S. § 15917

As you can see from the graph, a great deal of our communities' schools were built in a similar era and are now more than 50 years old. Every four years, the Maine chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers provides a comprehensive assessment of Maine's infrastructure, and in its most recent 2020 report, Maine ASCE gave our schools a "C" and made the recommendation that "the debt ceiling limit for Major Capital Projects needs to be raised to keep up with inflation and the escalation observed in local construction costs." It is difficult to estimate how many projects would be funded given the age of the current list and significant escalation in construction costs since its issuance.

I would like to propose several amendments to the bill for the committee's consideration. As it was my intent that this initiative be funded in addition to the proposed GPA funding in the biennial, there should be a fiscal note to reflect that appropriation. Furthermore, the timeframe of the increase should go out several additional years as it can take upwards of five to six years for a community project to proceed through the state's major construction process's 21 steps.

I also have learned that the state can bond to pay for its contributions to school construction debt service, which the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee can discuss should this committee vote in favor of increasing our capacity to build healthier and safer school facilities.

According to “State of Our Schools: America’s K–12 Facilities,” a joint publication of the 21st Century School Fund, Inc., U.S. Green Building Council, Inc., and the National Council on School Facilities, “Research shows that high-quality facilities help improve student achievement, reduce truancy and suspensions, improve staff satisfaction and retention, and raise property values. They also are integral to ensuring equity in educational offerings and opportunities for students.”

As we work towards improving educational outcomes for all students, I hope you will join me in supporting investments in our infrastructure to provide safe, healthy and educationally appropriate facilities.

Thank you for your consideration.

The Department of Education recommends the following list of School Facilities Priorities to the State Board of Education. This list is based on a rating of the overall needs of evaluated school facilities as defined in State Board of Education Chapter 61, Rules for Major Capital School Construction Projects.

<u>Priority</u>	<u>School District</u>	<u>School Name</u>	<u>Total Points</u>
1	RSU 49/MSAD 49	Fairfield Primary School	137.69
2	RSU 54/MSAD 54	North Elementary School	124.60
3	RSU 10	Rumford Elementary School	115.19
4	Saco Public Schools	Young School	114.65
5	RSU 14	Windham Middle School	111.27
6	RSU 17/MSAD 17	Agnes Gray School	110.33
7	RSU 17/MSAD 17	Oxford Hills Middle School	109.73
8	RSU 53/MSAD 53	Manson Park School	108.73
9	Augusta Public Schools	Lillian Parks Hussey School	108.01
10	RSU 03/MSAD 03	Walker Memorial School	107.89
11	RSU 53/MSAD 53	Vickery School	107.79
12	RSU 23	Loranger Memorial School	106.71
13	Hancock Public Schools	Hancock Grammar School	106.07
14	RSU 29/MSAD 29	Houlton Elementary School	105.43
15	Portland Public Schools	Portland High School	105.24
16	RSU 03/MSAD 03	Morse Memorial School	105.05
17	RSU 12	Palermo Consolidated School	102.98
18	Ellsworth Public Schools	Hancock County Technical Center	102.85
19	Dayton Public Schools	Dayton Consolidated School	101.90
20	RSU 22	Earl C McGraw School	101.13
21	RSU 79/MSAD 1	Presque Isle High School	98.97
22	RSU 01 - LKRSU	Fisher Mitchell School	98.73
23	RSU 54/MSAD 54	Bloomfield Elementary School	97.03
24	RSU 54/MSAD 54	Canaan Elementary School	96.64
25	Portland Public Schools	Portland Arts & Technology High School	96.31
26	RSU 57/MSAD 57	Massabesic High School	96.08
27	RSU 10	Mountain Valley Middle School	95.85
28	RSU 41/MSAD 41	Penquis Valley Middle/High School	95.76
29	Cherryfield Public Schools	Cherryfield Elementary School	95.60
30	RSU 64/MSAD 64	Central High School	95.32
31	RSU 54/MSAD 54	Skowhegan Area High School and Somerset Tech Ctr	95.19
32	Saco Public Schools	C K Burns School	95.08
33	RSU 18	China Middle School	94.32
34	Scarborough Public Schools	Eight Corners Elementary School	92.31
35	Lamoine Public Schools	Lamoine Consolidated School	92.10

<u>Priority</u>	<u>School District</u>	<u>School Name</u>	<u>Total Points</u>
36	Scarborough Public Schools	Pleasant Hill School	91.67
37	RSU 16	Minot Consolidated School	91.34
38	RSU 10	Meroby Elementary School	91.10
39	RSU 49/MSAD 49	Clinton Elementary School	90.75
40	Baileysville Public Schools	Woodland Jr-Sr High School	87.22
41	Biddeford Public Schools	Biddeford Regional Center of Technology	86.73
42	RSU 11/MSAD 11	Pittston Consolidated School	86.57

43	RSU 79/MSAD 1	Eva Hoyt Zippel School	86.49
44	Brunswick Public Schools	Brunswick Jr High School	86.38
45	RSU 54/MSAD 54	Margaret Chase Smith School	86.01
46	RSU 79/MSAD 1	Pine Street Elementary School	85.68
47	Lisbon Public Schools	Lisbon High School	85.22
48	Baileysville Public Schools	Woodland Elementary School	85.15
49	Scarborough Public Schools	Blue Point School	83.81
50	RSU 01 - LKRSU	Dike Newell School	80.42
51	RSU 75/MSAD 75	Harpswell Community School	80.06
52	RSU 41/MSAD 41	Milo Elementary School	79.94
53	RSU 40/MSAD 40	Medomak Valley High School	79.39
54	RSU 53/MSAD 53	Warsaw Middle School	79.11
55	RSU 18	Ralph M Atwood Primary School	78.26
56	RSU 12	Whitefield Elementary School	77.30
57	RSU 23	Jameson Elementary School	72.99
58	RSU 49/MSAD 49	Albion Elementary School	72.87
59	Scarborough Public Schools	Scarborough Middle School	72.37
60	Brunswick - Region 10	Maine Region Ten Technical High School	72.28
61	RSU 63/MSAD 63	Holbrook School	72.21
62	RSU 22	George B Weatherbee School	70.79
63	RSU 18	Belgrade Central School	68.76
64	RSU 63/MSAD 63	Eddington School	66.79
65	Biddeford Public Schools	John F Kennedy Memorial School	66.18
66	RSU 63/MSAD 63	Holden School	65.56
67	RSU 10	Mountain Valley High School	65.03
68	Saco Public Schools	Saco Middle School	61.75
69	RSU 18	Williams Elementary School	59.90
70	RSU 18	James H Bean School	58.49
71	RSU 23	Old Orchard Beach High School	57.95
72	Saco Public Schools	Governor John Fairfield School	52.69
73	Medway Public Schools	Medway Middle School	44.91
74	RSU 64/MSAD 64	Central Middle School	43.35



**2017 - 2018 Rating Cycle**  
**Major Capital School Construction Program**  
**Approved Projects List**  
**9.14.2022**

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*The Maine Commissioner of Education recommends and the State Board of Education designates the following projects from the Final Priority List that it intends to fund for the 2017-18 rating cycle.*

<b><u>Priority</u></b>	<b><u>School District</u></b>	<b><u>School Name</u></b>	<b><u>Date</u></b>
1	RSU 49/MSAD 49	Fairfield Primary School	10.9.19
2	RSU 54/MSAD 54	North Elementary School	10.9.19
3	RSU 10	Rumford Elementary School	10.9.19
4	Saco Public Schools	Young School	11.4.20
5	RSU 14	Windham Middle School	11.4.20
6	RSU 17	Agnes Gray School	9.14.22
7	RSU 17	Oxford Hills Middle School	9.14.22