

Chair Rafferty and Chair Brennen, and the distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

My name is Shukri Abdirahman and I live in Lewiston Maine. I am a co-director of Maine Youth Power, a youth-led, youth movement throughout rural and suburban Maine fighting to win human dignity, equity and a livable future for all. I am here today to ask that you support Representative Dodge's bill LD 1002 An Act to Require a Lunch Period of at Least 30 Minutes for Students and Reduce Food Waste.

As someone who has advocated for the well being of students and especially the youth, I strongly support this bill. I have 3 younger siblings in middle and high school and 3 nieces in elementary school. This bill would ensure that young people like my siblings and nieces would be able to have longer lunch periods and avoid some unwanted stressors. This bill would also allow them to follow their traditions of having to wash their hands and cleaning themselves to eat. For example, not every child eats the same and takes the same time to each lunch. Lunch periods should be longer therefore students can fully digest their food and have enough time to fuel. For example, in comparison with other countries, France school lunch breaks are 90 minutes and longer along with China, Japan, and Spain.

I believe this bill is an important bill to pass because students who are in public schools rarely get enough time to properly eat a lunch with no time constraints. Students engage in learning, playing, and interacting with other students therefore making lunch periods longer would allow students to recharge and fuel to learn in their best capacities. Student's shouldn't be rushed to eat lunch; this could create unwanted consequences. School lunches should be scheduled before lunches and should require enough time for students to get to the cafeteria and actually sit down and eat.

Sincerely,
Shukri Abdirahman