

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

My name is Phoebe Dolan, I live in Swanville, Maine and 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 a rural youth activist and community organizer in Maine alone, I have spoken with a lot of students who spend each day attending Maine's public school system. Children in their early years all the way through high school are responsible for attending school and are trusting that the school will care for their needs. Eating and having space to go outside and play or at least breathe fresh air is a right. Many young people I have spoken to this past year, before representative Dodge's bill was brought to my attention, shared with me that the first thing they wanted changed about the school day was a longer lunch - an hour being the optimal time.

Children are in school from 7:45 am or 8am until 2:30 or 3pm and then they often play sports, or participate in afterschool activities until. That is a long day if you do not have time to properly eat your lunch around the middle of the day. If you wait in the lunch line for 10 or 15 minutes and lunch is only 20 minutes long, then you are left with a sliver of time left.

I am sharing with you the stories I have heard, and as a child who went to school in Maine, it is essential to secure all the children's right to a 30 minute lunch break. Support LD1002: An Act to Require a Lunch Period of at Least 30 Minutes for Students and Reduce Food Waste, which will support the next generation of politicians in our state.

Thank you for your time,
Phoebe Dolan

