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TESTIMONY REGARDING

L.D. 335

AN ACT TO IMPROVE EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION RESPONSE TIMES

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Eileen King, deputy executive director of Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association, regarding L.D. 335 – MSBA is neither for nor against and MSSA is opposed.

Over recent years the wait time for educator certification has been up to and sometimes longer than 12 weeks. While we appreciate the intent of the bill, there has been a marked improvement in recent wait times for educator certification and the Maine Department of Education website now shows that they are currently processing applications received within the last 3-4 weeks. We understand that there is a “bottle neck” towards the end of the year to gain re-certification status, but due to some recent changes, educators can submit for re-certification anytime during the year their certificate expires which should improve that end of year rush. District re-certification steering committees can help with this by encouraging educators needing to recertify to not wait until the end of the year.

Our organizations feel that due to the improvement of the wait times and the number of staff and the costs associated with this bill, this level of need is no longer justified. Under the new leadership of the Director of Higher Education and Support Services we hope that the response times continue to remain at or better than current levels and that gaining certification status in Maine is easily obtainable.