



Maine Education Association  
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**Testimony  
In Support of  
LD 753 An Act to Allow Retired Teachers and Educational Technicians to Be Recertified  
Grace Leavitt, President, Maine Education Association  
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs  
March 14, 2023**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

My name is Grace Leavitt. My pronouns are she, her, hers. I am serving as President of the Maine Education Association while on leave from teaching Spanish in MSAD 51. I have over 43 years of classroom teaching experience with 20 years as a National Board Certified teacher. The MEA represents nearly 24,000 educators in our Maine system of public education in pre-K-12 schools as well as in our institutions of higher education, both the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System, along with students in teacher prep programs as well as many retired educators.

I am here to testify on behalf of MEA in support of LD 753, An Act to Allow Retired Teachers and Educational Technicians to Be Recertified.

I am sure we all hope never to experience another global pandemic. COVID-19 took a huge toll on our educator workforce. It also impacted other sectors, of course, but given the educator shortages we were already seeing prior to March 2020, the number of vacancies for positions needed to provide the instruction and the programs our students deserve is especially difficult to address. As we talked more about the shortages, I heard from some retired educators that they would consider helping out by coming back to our schools, but their certifications had lapsed. I have to say, we have incredibly dedicated retired educators who continue to care about students in our state. But once your certification lapses, you have to start the entire process over to become certified again. LD 753 would allow for those who do wish to come back to do so, as long as it is within a reasonable span of time. I can't say that there will be droves of retirees returning to our schools. There may be some who, like the ones who reached out to me, would like to help. There may be some who, given their pensions and the social security offsets, find themselves wishing they had held off on their decision to retire. Whatever the number of educators that might like to return to our schools, if this makes it possible for even just a few to do so, especially in these challenging times, it will make a difference for students. I would just add that a few of the retirees that I spoke with also said that the fees for recertification were a barrier they could not easily afford to overcome. If there could also be a remedy for that, it surely would help as well.

There are a number of proposed bills looking at ways to help address the shortages we are seeing. LD 753 may not help in a big way, but if it helps even a little, it is worthy of your consideration. We urge you to vote 'ought to pass' on LD 753.

Respectfully,

*Grace Leavitt*

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