



**Testimony of Anna Korsen, Full Plates Full Potential
Neither for nor Against LD 1128**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Anna Korsen, Advocacy and Implementation Director with Full Plates Full Potential, a statewide non-profit working to address childhood food insecurity by providing technical and financial assistance to schools and communities to help feed kids now, while advocating for the systemic changes necessary to ensure that all Maine children have consistent access to nutritious meals. Our strategy is to maximize access to USDA Child Nutrition Programs - commonly known as school lunch, school breakfast, afterschool meals, and summer meals.

Today, I'm submitting testimony neither for nor against LD 1128 "An Act to Address Student Hunger and Nutrition Through Expanded Access to Free Milk in Schools." We would like to thank Senator Tipping for introducing this bill, and to emphasize that we are in support of increased access to nutrition for all Maine students.

Milk is available at no cost to all students as part of Maine's school meals for all policy. According to the Maine Department of Education and school nutrition professionals across our state, every student in Maine can currently receive free milk during lunch without taking the full meal being offered. In order to receive a meal at no cost, students can choose to take all five nutritional components being offered (milk, protein, dairy, fruits and vegetables), or can choose three of the five components. For students bringing lunch from home or otherwise choosing not to participate in the full meal, many school nutrition programs bundle milk along with a fruit and vegetable, fulfilling the nutritional requirements of a free school lunch. Students can save the fruit and veggies for a snack for later, or place them in a share basket for their peers. This is a great solution, as more students participating in the school lunch program reduces the stigma around school meals and strengthens school nutrition programs. Additionally, this solution means more nutritious foods are being offered to students at lunch.

Thank you for your time and continued support of school nutrition programs in Maine.

Anna Korsen
Advocacy and Implementation Director
Full Plates Full Potential
akorsen@fullplates.org
207.653.6301