

Good afternoon. I'm Steve Karp. To the Honorable Chairs, Senator Rafferty and Representative Brennan and the rest of this of this committee, greetings from Waldoboro.

A. A quote from DOE's Chapter 117, Section 2, paragraph F:

"Privileged Communication means A school counselor or school social worker may not be required, except as provided by 20-A MRSA §4008(3), to divulge or release information gathered during a counseling relation with a client or with the parent" [end quote], guardian or a person or agency having legal custody of a minor client. A counseling relation and the information resulting from it shall be kept confidential consistent with the professional obligations of the counselor or social worker. *20-A MRSA §4008(2)*

Any society is only as strong as the families within that society. The proposed legislation, LD 394 (which codifies into law, Chapter 117), legalizes deceit in the family, creating distrust within the family and as a result, weakening the family. When my children were younger, as a father I know that I would have wanted to be included in any and all discussions and decisions regarding my children. This bill would effectively cut fathers (and mothers) out of the loop.

We need more parental involvement in our children's lives, not less. I have a suggestion. Why don't the members of this committee go back to the DOE and work on a new policy which encourages this? Require all school districts in this State to have a Parent - Teacher Association, to require periodic and regular Parent – Teacher conferences for each individual student and where applicable, periodic and regular Parent – Counselor Conferences, whether it be with the School Counselor or School Social Worker. This will create a support team for our children (with the aforementioned parties) most importantly including ^{our} parents.

As I said earlier, a society is only as strong as the families within that society. Maine is only as strong as the families in Maine.

My comments are respectfully submitted. Thank you for your time.