

Testimony on bill #LD1064,SP0433

An act to increase the minimum teacher salary

Hello, my name is Maya Koerber-Marx and I am a sophomore at Brunswick High School, and I would like to testify in support of this bill. Today I would like to offer you a perspective that is perhaps one of the most important to make a decision on this issue which is that of a student. I spend about 7 hours a day 5 days a week for over 8 months a year with teachers. I can assure you that the teachers in Maine are some of the most important, amazing, and impactful people in my life. Teachers are the ones responsible for the future generation. They are responsible for our future lawyers, doctors, and of course our future state senators and representatives. Why should the people who hold such an important role in shaping the lives of young people that are going to hold powerful positions not be paid as such? Everyone likes to talk about my generation, the ones everyone is relying on for change, their hope for us, how powerful we are, but none of this would be possible if I didn't have the teachers I do in Maine. Some of my teachers are my role models, some are like my friends. I'm not gonna stand here and say I get along with all of them because that would be a lie but even the ones I don't agree with have taught me so many valuable lessons beyond the curriculum for the class. I would not be the person I am today, I would not be standing here without all of my Maine teachers. Without teachers our society would quite literally not be able to function yet they are paid so unfairly. A report from the Economic Policy Institute published on December 6th, 2022 stated that there is no lack of qualified teachers yet we are facing a pre-existing and long-standing teacher shortage that has been worsened by the pandemic due to "few qualified teachers willing to work at current compensation levels given the increasingly stressful environment facing teachers." One of the two solutions this report outlined is that we need to address the long-standing decline in the pay of teachers relative to other workers with a college degree and this bill is an excellent step in that direction. Thank you for your time.