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TESTIMONY NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST

L.D. 1608

AN ACT TO ADDRESS TEACHER SHORTAGES THROUGH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Steven Bailey, 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, neither for nor against L.D. 1608.

Our associations support the intent of this program and its goal, which is to encourage and support more students in Maine to go into teaching. The funding would go to the Maine Teacher Residency Program at the University of Southern Maine.

The proposed \$1 million in funding, which is described as ongoing, would go into the General Purpose Aid fund and provide loans of up to \$8,000 per year for eligible students.

This proposal would certainly be an incentive for students to go into the teacher residency program, but we would like to have more information.

The bill discusses a MEPRI study on career ladders for educators and that makes sense, but we believe that study should come first before funding is allocated.

We also question why the funding is going into the General Purpose Aid account, which as you know is GPA for pre-K-12 schools and not for higher education. We didn't think these funds should be commingled. How will that work?