



The Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs  
Testimony from Kaitlin Young, Policy and Program Manager, Educate Maine

**In Support Of**

L.D. 1608: "An Act to Address Teacher Shortages Through Financial Assistance  
and Career Advancement Opportunities"

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs: My name is Kaitlin Young, Policy and Program Manager of Educate Maine. I represent a business-led organization, with two-thirds of our board of directors coming from the business sector.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of L.D. #1608. Educate Maine's mission is to ensure that Maine people are prepared to succeed in education and career and that all Maine people reach their highest educational potential. As a member of the MaineSpark coalition, we measure this by attainment - the share of adult workers with a postsecondary credential of value in demand by Maine employers. Maine's goal is to reach 60% by 2025. We strongly believe that a well-prepared, diverse, and stable educator workforce is essential in achieving our mission and ensuring that all Maine learners have access to exceptional educators who can equip them with the skills, knowledge, and credentials necessary to succeed in postsecondary education and the workforce.

The problem of teacher shortage is multifaceted, and addressing it requires a comprehensive approach. LD 1608 is a critical step in addressing this crisis in Maine by providing multiple strategies outlined in the [Teach Maine Plan](#) to strengthen and support the educator workforce across the teacher pipeline. The bill aims to incentivize recruitment efforts through financial assistance and explore career advancement opportunities for teachers to attract and retain more individuals in the profession.

One of the key provisions in the bill is the emphasis on teacher residencies. Teacher residency models provide a hands-on, immersive experience for teacher candidates in real classrooms, allowing them to gain a comprehensive and realistic view of the teaching profession. They also provide candidates with a supportive community of experienced educators offering mentorship, feedback, and guidance throughout the program. In addition to supporting preparation, these experiences connect teacher candidates to the students, schools, and communities they hope to serve in the future.

While teacher residencies are a relatively new concept in education, they have quickly gained popularity due to their potential to prepare and retain educators and promote positive student outcomes. In a recent study by the National Center for Teacher Residencies, 89% of teacher residency graduates stayed in the teaching field, and 96% of partner residency-hosting principals reported that the residency program positively impacted student learning and achievement. The Maine Teacher Residency Program has also shown promising results since its pilot program's start. Investing in teacher residencies is beneficial for teacher candidates and their students, as well as the education system as a whole. Retaining highly qualified teachers improves the quality of education in schools and ensures that all students have access to a high-quality education. It also reduces the costs associated with teacher turnover, such as recruiting and training new teachers, which can strain already-tight budgets.

As a business-led non-profit organization, it is crucial to invest in education. Investing in teachers is investing in the future of the state's workforce. LD 1608 recognizes the importance of this investment and provides the necessary support to ensure that students have access to well-prepared and effective teachers.

I encourage you to support LD # 1608 and help ensure Maine attracts and retains a diverse, talented, and stable educator workforce. Thank you for your time, the opportunity to testify, and for considering this in your deliberations.

Kaitlin Young