



## Maine Education Association

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### Testimony

### In Opposition

### LD 1297: An Act to Notify School Boards and Select Boards That Lobbying Associations Are not Governmental Agencies

John Kosinski, Government Relations Director, Maine Education Association

Before the State and Local Government Committee

April 21, 2023

Senator Nangle, Representative Stover and other esteemed members of the State and Local Government Committee,

My name is John Kosinski (he/him) and I am proud to serve as the Director of Government Relations for the Maine Education Association (MEA). The MEA represents 24,000 educators in the state of Maine, including teachers and other professionals in nearly every public school in the state and faculty and other professional staff in the University of Maine and Community College Systems.

I submit this testimony on behalf of the MEA in opposition to LD 1297, *An Act to Notify School Boards and Select Boards That Lobbying Associations Are Not Governmental Agencies*.

We are unsure what problem this bill attempts to solve, but we feel it is a solution in search of a problem. This bill is government overreach and appears to be a blatant attempt to interfere with the First Amendment rights of individuals.

I can only assume the Maine Education Association would be deemed a “private entity that has as its mission or purpose or as part of its activities the influencing of a school board” as specified under this proposal. The MEA clearly advocates before school boards. In fact, we actively encourage our members and local associations to engage with school boards about challenges and successes in our public schools. We believe strongly educators and school boards and administrators must have open and on-going communication – in fact, our schools work best when all three are rowing in the same direction. Any effort to impede the communication between local associations of the MEA and the educators they represent is nothing less than a disservice to the students we are attempting to educate. We believe this bill will only serve to stifle communication with school boards and municipal officers, and for this reason we oppose LD 1297.

Thank you for your time and your service to the people of Maine. I will do my best to answer any questions you may have.

35 Community Drive, Augusta, ME 04330 | 1349 Broadway, Bangor, ME 04401  
7 Hatch Drive, Suite 220, Caribou, ME 04736 | 29 Christopher Toppi Drive, South Portland ME 04106

207-622-5866 | 207-888-2070 fax | [www.maineaa.org](http://www.maineaa.org)