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Maine State Legislature
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

April 26, 2023

Members

Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
5 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0100

RE: Testimony in Support of LD 1185 (SP 481) *An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Recapitalize the School Revolving Renovation Fund*

Dear Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and Honorable Colleagues:

I first want to commend my friend, Senator Ingwersen, for his leadership in introducing this legislation and I want to speak in strong support of this desperately needed bond measure.

Our schools are the foundation upon which we build our future, and so vital it is to preserve and maintain them that the State Constitution has decreed their upkeep as one of our most consequential responsibilities. But no school, however well-built or maintained, is immune to the passing of time, and as generations pass, the foundation for our tomorrow is buckling and cracking under today's enormous financial pressures.

The communities I represent are among the poorest and most rural in our State, but our school system, like many if not most, has borne the brunt of declining enrollment, and even though my constituents are living paycheck to paycheck, our property values, and therefore property taxes, continue to skyrocket.

It's highway robbery, and this destructive confluence stemming from an out-of-date funding formula, has forced Maine schools to cut corners and find short-term, not long-term solutions to the increasingly complicated problems public schools are expected to correct.

There's simply not enough money to maintain our classrooms, and even if schools were to propose such an initiative, many districts would struggle to reconcile the requisite school tax increases in order to do it.

What's more, we find countless school facilities designed in different eras. If this bill passes, it could provide much needed relief to these districts that try to upgrade and enhance features that makes our schools more safe and secure.

We need State intervention, and this is the only bill this session that would provide targeted support to our school recapitalization projects, and for these reasons, I strongly support passage of this measure.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony, please let me know if I can provide you with additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nathan Carlow". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'N'.

Nathan Carlow
State Representative