

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and other members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, and

My name is **Dennis J Boyd Jr** and I work at **Oxford Hills Middle School and Comprehensive High School** as a **Music Educator** and I live in **Norway, Maine**. I am here today to testify in support of LD 34, An Act to Increase the Minimum Salary for Teachers.

I started my career in education as a long term sub for the Bonny Eagle School District. As a long term sub, I was paid \$34,000 a year in 2007. When I arrived at Oxford Hills in the fall of 2009, I took a pay cut to \$31500 a year to do a similar job. In 2009, I had to keep working on weekends and all summer in order to pay the bills a young person has to pay; Rent or Mortgage, car payment/repairs, food, entertainment, etc.

With all that happening I simply did not have time to take any additional course work towards a masters degree. I came into work exhausted on Monday mornings, and didn't really catch up on rest until summertime when I could focus on my one side job.

It took me until the summer of 2019 when I could finally begin my masters degree and could focus on bettering my craft as an educator. The only reason I could afford this \$30,000 investment is my school system and our collective bargaining agreement allows for course reimbursement.

The students of our post pandemic world need expert educators and caring souls. It has become harder and harder to ask young people to join the ranks of educators. The process of student teaching costs 12 credit hours, gas money to and from their placements, all while not being paid.

One way we can make it worth their while is to raise our minimum pay from \$40,000 to \$50,000. Many school systems are making this happen over time, but our local school systems need help to get there. Pandemic delayed tax evaluations have hit many communities hard over the past 2 years, and they simply cannot afford to do this without help. Western Maine is not the economic hotbed of our state, but our students deserve high quality, well educated, well rested educators ready to meet their needs. Thank you for your consideration.