

Jeffrey Harmon - Auburn
Martin Grohman - Biddeford
Carl Sheline - Lewiston
Mark Dion - Portland
Penelope York - Rockland
Cara Pelletier - Bangor



MAINE MAYORS COALITION
Strengthening Our Cities & Our State

Jodi MacPhail - Saco
Becky Brink - Sanford
Richard Matthews - South Portland
Michael Morris - Waterville
David Morse - Westbrook

Supported By: Mitchell Tardy Jackson Government Affairs - 104 Sewall Street, Augusta, Maine 04330 - 207-622-1365

Maine Mayors Coalition Testimony on LD 193 An Act to Fund Students in Maine Schools Who Are Experiencing Homelessness

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, the Maine Mayors Coalition is providing testimony in support of LD 193, An Act to Fund Students in Maine Schools Who Are Experiencing Homelessness.

The Maine Mayors Coalition is a nonpartisan group representing the mayors of eleven Maine communities – Auburn, Bangor, Biddeford, Lewiston, Portland, Rockland, Saco, Sanford, South Portland, Waterville and Westbrook – and nearly 300,000 residents. The Coalition advocates on behalf of our citizens and municipalities for policies that recognize the vital services Maine cities provide and the positive impact Maine cities have on our state. The Coalition seeks to work in partnership with state and federal elected officials to meet the needs of Maine people.

One of our most important obligations as public officials is to our young people – they are Maine's future. Ensuring they receive the best education possible prepares them to become thriving members of society.

As you're well aware, some municipalities need additional resources to support students who face extraordinary challenges in their lives. One such challenge for a growing number of students is not having basic shelter. Over the last few years, municipalities of all sizes have seen more and more students experiencing homelessness.

Among our Coalition members, Lewiston has 420 unhoused students. Auburn reported 234 for the 2023/2024 school year and expects to meet or exceed that number in this school year. Biddeford has 200 unhoused students, South Portland 180, Saco 150 and Westbrook 122. That totals more than 1,300 unhoused students in just these six cities. Given the state's lack of affordable housing, we expect the numbers will rise, not fall.

We fully support the change to the Essential Programs and Services funding formula proposed in LD 193 that would give additional weight to a school administrative unit's pupil count for students experiencing homelessness. This change would allow schools to provide the resources needed for unhoused students to access a quality education without placing the additional costs on to property taxpayers.

Thank you for your time and attention.