

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 501  
An Act to Fairly Fund School Administrative Units for  
Economically Disadvantaged Students**

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 501, An Act to Fairly Fund School Administrative Units for Economically Disadvantaged Students.

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.

Maine's children are our state's greatest legacy. Providing them with a quality education that prepares them for the future is one of the most important investments our cities and state can make. We appreciate the Legislature's commitment to fully fund the state's share of K-12 education. This commitment, in turn, provides relief to homeowners and businesses who are responsible for the remaining share paid through their property taxes.

Our schools strive to provide all students with a level playing field so they have the opportunity to realize their full potential. Often, among those in need of additional support are students who are economically disadvantaged. Well over 50 percent of the students in many of our cities fall into this category. 68 percent of Lewiston students and 67 percent of Westbrook students are considered economically disadvantaged. The number is 64 percent in Biddeford and 55 percent in Auburn. We anticipate this trend will continue amid the rising costs of shelter, food, energy and other essentials.

It is more and more difficult for municipalities to provide extra support within our existing budgets. We are forced to, once again, turn to property taxpayers to bear the costs. Increasing the weighted count for economically disadvantaged students in the Essential Programs and Services funding formula, as proposed in LD 501, would help us meet our students' needs and alleviate the financial impact on property taxpayers.

We respectfully urge you to support LD 501 for our students, our taxpayers and the future of our state. Thank you for your time and attention.