



Joseph E. Rafferty
Senator, District 34

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

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Testimony of Senator Joe Rafferty in Support of LD 134, "An Act to Require Certain Individuals Who Instruct Children Under 18 Years of Age in Dance or Creative Movement to Undergo a Criminal Background Check"
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
March 12, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Joe Rafferty. I represent Senate District 34, which includes Berwick, North Berwick, Wells, Kennebunk and Kennebunkport. I appreciate the opportunity to introduce LD 134, *"An Act to Require Certain Individuals Who Instruct Children Under 18 Years of Age in Dance or Creative Movement to Undergo a Criminal Background Check"*.

The idea for this legislation originally came from one of my constituents. Their daughter had signed up for dance lessons at a private dance studio that was located in the instructor's home. The student's mother reported to me that there had been many abuses during those dance lessons, prompting the mother to ask how the instructor had ever been allowed to teach children. The goal of this legislation is to prevent such cases from occurring in the future.

This bill requires individuals who provide dance classes to children under 18 years of age to undergo a criminal background check. Parents are not only outing their trust in these instructors, but also paying for these lessons. They should be able to drop off their kids with the peace of mind that their children are learning in a safe and constructive environment. The bill also requires that the Department of Health and Human Services adopt rules to implement the criminal background check requirement.

In today's world, it never hurts to be safe when it comes to the wellbeing of our children. This bill enables us to be proactive, rather than reactive, and make sure qualified and safe individuals are there to help enrich our children's artistic endeavors.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I will try and answer any questions you may have to the best of my ability. Thank you.

Joe Rafferty