



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony
In Support of

LD 482 An Act to An Act to Expand Educational Opportunities and Broaden Educational Services for Students Enrolled in Equivalent Instruction Programs

Dear Sen Rafferty, Rep. Murphy and fellow members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. I am State Representative Barbara Bagshaw, representing District 106, part of Windham. I am sponsoring **LD 482 An Act to An Act to Expand Educational Opportunities and Broaden Educational Services for Students Enrolled in Equivalent Instruction Programs**.

As hard as we work in the Legislature, Maine families need more education options now. Every kid is different, and families deserve the agency to shape their learning.

Imagine a child who attends a private school, micro-school, homeschool co-op, or other equivalent instruction program, mostly satisfied with her programming, but her local public school offers a science lab, shop class, or an advanced algebra class that could help her. Why should bureaucracy get in the way of furthering her education?

Today, there are two different sets of rules for students opting out of their local public school. Homeschoolers can access extracurricular and co-curricular activities, and academic classes offered by their resident SAU, while private school students can only access extracurricular and co-curricular activities.

The law should treat every child the same and ensure open access to public education. LD 482 designates one set of guidelines for all non-public students to participate in their local district's classes, activities, or services if they wish, instead of treating students differently based on the educational model they choose.

By removing the superintendent approval requirement to audit classes, it cuts red tape and trusts families to place their kids into educational programming that works best for them.

Public schools benefit as well. Each of these students would be funded by the state subsidy between 0.25 and 1.0 of full-time enrollment status, depending on how much time they spend in the school.

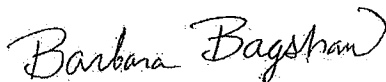
Furthermore, the addition of section 6-A would expand opportunity by helping small-scale private educators more easily host programs in community buildings and other spaces. Across the state, especially in rural areas, building space is hard to come by. Even though in nearly every town, a church or community center exists which is empty several days of the week. These buildings may be used for children's programming already, so there is no reason to limit educators from contracting for the space as well.

I am grateful to my co-sponsors from both sides of the aisle for recognizing the need for more educational options for Maine families. This isn't red or blue – it's just common sense.

LD 482 is a win for kids, a win for local schools, and a win for public education overall. Please deem LD 482 Ought to Pass and increase educational opportunity across Maine.

Thank you for your time, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Bagshaw". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Barbara Bagshaw
State Representative