

To: Committee on Taxation, Maine State Legislature
From: Jackson Chadwick, Maine Youth for Climate Justice
Date: Wednesday, March 26, 2025



RE: Testimony in support of L.D. 1089: “An Act to Permanently Fund 55 Percent of the State's Share of Education by Establishing a Tax on Incomes of More than \$1,000,000”

Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation,

My name is Jackson Chadwick, and I am the Advocacy Director for Maine Youth for Climate Justice (MYCJ). We advocate for a just transition from fossil fuels to a sustainable future where Maine’s youth and young adults can thrive. Our organization is 500+ members strong, consisting of high school and college students, environmental activists, rural leaders, and young adults entering and contributing to the Maine workforce. To help cultivate leadership skills, we host monthly educational programs that connect youth with the Maine State House.

On behalf of MYCJ, I am here today to testify in strong support of L.D. 1089, which would establish a 4% surtax on taxable income over \$1 million to permanently fund 55% of the state’s share of education funding.

This bill is about justice. It is about equity. And it’s about fairness for working people disproportionately burdened by our current tax structure.

It is not “just” that middle-class Mainers pay a larger share of their income in taxes than the wealthiest 1% in our state¹. Nor is it right that we should expect low and moderate-income Mainers to shoulder the responsibility of adequately funding our education system. That responsibility should increasingly be shifted to the top 1% who can afford to pay their fair share.

Climate justice endeavors to address systemic inequalities as we transition away from fossil fuels. Every young person in Maine deserves access to a strong and effective public education system - a properly funded system that does not burden low and moderate-income Mainers. This legislation addresses just that. LD 1089 also meets the moment's urgency by providing a straightforward pathway to help fund education. It is bold, smart, and frankly, long overdue.

¹ Maine Center for Economic Policy: “Policy Brief: Tax Policy Solutions for 2025 and Beyond.”
<https://www.mecpep.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Tax-Policy-Solutions-for-2025-and-Beyond-MECEP.pdf>

Now is no time to sit idly by and allow the status quo to persist. Our tax structure needs reform, and LD 1089 is a positive first step in the right direction.

Maine Youth for Climate Justice respectfully asks you to vote to pass L.D. 1089.

Thank you for considering our testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jackson Chadwick". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "C".

Jackson Chadwick
Advocacy & Organizing Director
Maine Youth for Climate Justice