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2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1400
TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

Michael Brennan

49 Wellington Road
Portland, ME 04103
Phone: (207) 939-6462

Michael.Brennan@legislature.maine.gov

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Testimony of Representative Michael Brennan presenting

LD 973, An Act to Establish the Community Partnerships with Public School Systems Grant Program

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Good morning, Senator Rafferty, Representative Noonan Murphy and fellow distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Michael Brennan, and I represent House District 115, which includes a portion of Portland.

Today, I am here to introduce **LD 973, An Act to Establish the Community Partnerships with Public School Systems Grant Program**.

LD 973 establishes the Community Partnerships with Public School Systems Grant Program within the Department of Education to encourage the creation of partnerships between public and private colleges and universities, community action agencies and public schools. The measure also requires the program to provide grants to address mental health, public health, staff development or other issues identified by the community or schools.

This proposal is a hybrid approach to the more traditional community schools model. It is an effort to engage entire school districts while utilizing the significant resources available through colleges and universities. For example, in Portland, we are in the early stages of discussions of establishing a partnership between the University of Southern Maine and the Portland school system.

As you know, schools across the state are struggling to provide mental health services, meet staffing challenges and support student academic success. This model should be replicated across the state and bring much needed resources to local schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.