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Testimony of Dani O'Halloran presenting
LD 776, An Act to Provide Free School Lunches to Special Purpose Private Schools That Receive Students from the Public School System
Before the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Dani O'Halloran and I represent part of the great city of Brewer. Today, I am here to present **LD 776, An Act to Provide Free School Lunches to Special Purpose Private Schools That Receive Students from the Public School System.**

The intent of the bill is in its title: I want us as a state to be able to provide students from special purpose schools the same school lunches that kids at public schools receive. As many on this committee are well aware, specialized schools are vital spaces that help students who are in need of out-of-district placements to meet their educational and behavioral needs.

Often, students are sent from their public schools to these specialized schools because it is determined by teachers to be the best environment for their learning needs. This sometimes means kids must travel far outside their hometown to get to school. The increase in travel time not only adds an additional time crunch for families but also increased the expense of travel; gas, car maintenance and so on.

This bill seeks to alleviate some of the financial strain that those families feel by giving students in specialized schools the free lunched that our public-school students already receive daily. We all know that when our kids are fed they are better able to focus which results in better learning outcomes. And when our students are able to get the most out of school, we all thrive.

Thank you for allowing me to present this bill, and I will answer any questions I can.