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Maine State Legislature

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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS**

IN SUPPORT

April 8, 2025

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Madam Chairman, and honorable colleagues.

I am Nathan Carlow, I hail from the town of Buxton, Maine, and I am pleased to represent the people of Buxton and Hollis in the Maine State Legislature.

Today, I am before the committee to present L.D. 1271, *An Act to Make Permanent the Law Allowing School Boards to Accept the Volunteer Services of Immediate Family Members of Superintendents or School Board Members.*

In Bonny Eagle, the school district I proudly represent in the House, and from which I graduated, we recognize the manifold contributions of parents, residents, and retired educators who care about the health and vitality of our school system. They dedicate their time, talent, and treasure to provide support in classrooms, in libraries, and on field trips every day.

I imagine that this sense of compassion and care for students is not an uncommon attribute shared by Mainers across the state. In fact, I know for certain that rural districts are especially grateful for the support volunteers can provide.

I should point out that it's in rural communities like my own and many of yours where volunteers are most needed, but it's doubly true they can be extremely difficult to find and retain.

The spouses of school board directors and superintendents are often current or retired educators, coaches, and community leaders who would be delighted to support their school community by volunteering their time to help students, faculty, and professional staff members, but they are currently prohibited from serving in even unpaid, non-supervisory roles in schools.

Now certainly we can all agree that the prohibition against spouses of superintendents and school board directors from serving as compensated employees

LD 1271 TESTIMONY, CONTINUED

in that same school department is a well-founded idea guarding against nepotism, political patronage, and harassment issues.

But surely, we can trust school boards to craft their own policy recruiting volunteers seeking to serve in *unpaid* and *non-supervisory* positions, again, that is unpaid and non-supervisory positions.

And, for the second time, that's exactly what my bill proposes to do.

This legislation reestablishes a law that was repealed through a statutory repeal in 2024 that allows a school board to permit a spouse of a school board member to serve as a volunteer.

This legislation works for our communities, and ensures fairness in our schools by maintaining essential anti-nepotism guardrails, and allowing well-meaning people to help make our schools great spaces for our students.