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TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO

L.D. 653

AN ACT TO ALLOW TEACHERS TO QUALIFY FOR OVERTIME PAY

April 9, 2025

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor, I am Eileen King, the Deputy Executive Director of the Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and the Maine School Superintendents in opposition to L.D. 653.

Overtime pay is traditionally intended for hourly employees, whose wages are directly tied to the number of hours they work. Teachers are salaried professionals, with their compensation reflecting their full-time status, years of experience and degree status, rather than the specific hours worked. It is important to note that the nature of a teacher's work often includes duties outside the classroom, such as lesson planning, grading, professional development and attending parent teacher conferences.

We support fair compensation for teachers, as evidenced in that across many districts across the state, we are routinely seeing annual salary increases for educators between 3.5 and 5 percent. However, we believe that local CBAs are the appropriate pathway for addressing issues related to wages, hours and working conditions. Through collective bargaining, school districts and teachers can negotiate fair and reasonable terms that reflect the unique nature of the teaching profession.

L.D. 653 would also introduce a substantial financial strain on school budgets which already operate under tight financial constraints. These costs will fall on already overburdened school districts, possibly diverting funds from other critical areas like classroom materials, student support services, and facility maintenance. In short, if L.D. 653 were to pass, this would be one more unfunded mandate – something that our local taxpayers cannot support.

L.D. 653 also lacks clear direction for monitoring and approving overtime. Without an established process for pre-approving and verifying overtime, and agreeing why overtime is needed, school districts and teachers would need to negotiate them, opening a whole host of new issues in negotiations.

For these reasons, we ask you to vote ought not to pass to avoid handing over yet another unfunded mandate to our school districts.