

**Testimony in support of LD 1404: Resolve, to Create a Working Group on the Status of School Libraries and on Public Libraries in Maine**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Honorable Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

My name is Lisa Ladd, and I am a resident of Orland. I am testifying in strong support of LD 1404, which seeks to create a working group to study the needs of Maine's school and public libraries. This group will study library partnerships, facility conditions, access to technology, and the diversity of library collections—critical steps toward strengthening our libraries statewide.

I am the director of Buck Memorial Library in Bucksport. I serve three municipalities, Bucksport, Orland and Verona Island, with a population of over 7000 people. The library is a nonprofit organization, and is the 7th lowest funded for our service area. My 2087 patrons borrow over a 1000 items each week. We host weekly storytimes hosting 25-30 children and their caregivers. We have a teen led book club, biweekly crochet for all ages, and provide space for remote workers and students. And we are in our 4th year of our very popular Peep diorama contest.

As a nonprofit, we are particularly vulnerable to volatility in the stock market. My service area has many economic challenges, so we do not receive as much financial support from our patrons as some of the wealthier towns in Maine. With the price of books soaring and the pending possibility at the Supreme Court that the E-rate program will be eliminated, we feel very vulnerable. Small rural libraries like mine are facing difficult decisions about programs and services at a time when our communities need them more than ever.

When we had the devastating storms in 2024, our parking lot and library were filled with people accessing our internet, downloading FEMA information and just sharing as they worked to recover and support each other. Our library has become a central contributor to the needs of our community. We partner with H.O.M.E. Inc, the Age and Ability Friendly Committee and the Senior Center.

School and Public Libraries provide free resources, quality programs, instruction and digital support to their communities. We work with our public safety officials, our town governments, our businesses, and our nonprofits to ensure that our communities thrive and that all who walk through our doors have access to the information they need.

I urge the members of this committee to support LD 1404. This study is essential to understanding the needs of Maine's libraries and planning for their future and the needs of our citizens.

I thank you again for your time and would be willing to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Lisa Ladd

Director, Buck Memorial Library

[director@bucklibrary.org](mailto:director@bucklibrary.org) <https://www.bucklibrary.org/>