



Maine Education Association

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Testimony

In Opposition

LD 919: An Act to Require Parental Permission for Certain Surveys and Questionnaires Administered to Minors in Schools.

Jesse Hargrove, President, Maine Education Association

Before the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee

April 15, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and other esteemed members of the Labor Committee,

My name is Jesse Hargrove, I am a high school social studies teacher on leave serving as President of the Maine Education Association representing 24,000 members ranging from pre-k through higher education. I write in opposition to *LD 919 An Act to Require Parental Permission for Certain Surveys and Questionnaires Administered to Minors in Schools*.

Our opposition is rooted in the ambiguity of the bill. Surveys are tools utilized in academic settings every day, whether it be to better understand student learning styles or interests, or to encourage student voice and choice in the development of lessons or course content. By better understanding student hobbies and interests, I have been able to connect students to lesser-known corporations and stocks for the Stock Market Game, such as NVIDIA, and Lulu Lemon. Similarly, surveys and questionnaires are helpful in garnering student interest in historical eras and social concerns as my classes brainstormed for Maine National History Day or Project Citizen. Aside from these planning applications, questionnaires have evaluative uses as well. It has become common practice to post (either on the board or digital format) the daily learning targets. Educators commonly end a class period or activity with an "exit ticket" or other formative feedback loop to check student understanding and monitor progress to provide individual support or broad modification.

There are also a variety of operational uses for surveys and questionnaires. Guidance offices use such processes for course selections, extra-curricular activities such as sports and drama productions use them to enroll teams and casts. My son, much to my disappointment, passed on a questionnaire for a Chess Tournament that was hosted just for fun. As a yearbook advisor, I had to manage a financial budget (revenues and expenditures) but also a space budget, student questionnaires were essential to creating the layout and design as we had to know how many sibling pictures to plan for, how many Senior Superlatives, Baby Pictures and a variety of other features. Delays would threaten the ability to have yearbooks in families' hands, especially seniors, by graduation.

As we understand this bill, educators would be prohibited from using this educational practice, if it included a student's first and last name, without first seeking parental consent. Parents are already inundated with forms to complete and every year we struggle to get updated information. Adding more paperwork would further complicate educational and community programming. While this might not be the intent of the bill, as stated, the ambiguity of the bill could create interpretations that limit practices that have promoted student engagement and procedural efficiencies. I urge your opposition to LD 919.

Thank you and I will do my best to answer any questions you may have.

35 Community Drive, Augusta, ME 04330 | 1349 Broadway, Bangor, ME 04401
7 Hatch Drive, Suite 220, Caribou, ME 04736 | 29 Christopher Toppi Drive, South Portland ME 04106

207-622-5866 | 207-888-2070 fax | www.maineaa.org