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# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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April 16, 2025

*Testimony of Representative Edward Crockett introducing*  
**LD 803, An Act to Address Certification Violations for School Staff**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs*

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and other colleagues on the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Ed Crockett and I represent District 112 which is part of Portland and Falmouth. I am pleased to present to you **LD 803, An Act to Address Certification Violations for School Staff**.

I submitted this bill after discussions with representatives of the Maine Education Association. I am sure you are aware the Maine Education Association (MEA) represents thousands of teachers, ed techs and other certified professionals in our public schools. They brought to me concerns about the application of our current certification rules and how they are being applied and adapted. As you all know, schools have struggled to find certified teachers and staff and we know many schools are hiring educators who may lack the necessary qualifications. The MEA reports, as you will hear in a few minutes, that some districts are making little attempt to abide by the rules and this bill is about bringing accountability to the state's certifications rules and laws.

I hope we can all agree that our state's certification laws and rules, or any laws and rules for that matter, are ineffective unless those laws and rules are enforced.

This committee and the State Board of Education spend a considerable amount of time and effort reviewing and debating the certification standards for teachers and other educators, and for good reason. The laws and the rules governing certification determines who is eligible to work in our schools. Through certification, we determine what skills and experiences educators need to work in our schools. This is an important question and one that I know this Committee takes seriously.

The bill before you lays out a process that requires administrators and school boards to undertake if they are hiring staff that do not meet the qualifications under our rules and laws.

Although I am not wedded to this process, I would like to see, based on the comments from the MEA and others, a better process in place to ensure all students, wherever they live, have access to qualified teachers and educators.

I can try to answer any questions you have, but I expect individuals coming behind me will have more information and may be better suited to answer specific questions you may have.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to working with my colleagues to fine tune and pass this bill.