

132nd Legislature
Senate of
Maine
Senate District 29

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Testimony of Senator Anne Carney introducing
**LD 363, “An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Create the
School Capital Improvement Fund,”**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
April 17, 2025

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and esteemed members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, I am Senator Anne Carney, proudly representing Senate District 29, which includes South Portland, Cape Elizabeth and part of Scarborough. It is a pleasure to be with you today to speak in support of LD 363, “An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Create the School Capital Improvement Fund.”

This legislation addresses an issue affecting many Maine communities – deteriorating school buildings that no longer provide a safe, healthy and appropriate learning environment. These school buildings have wide glass doors instead of locking vestibules; they have mold and aging heating systems instead of dry ceilings and cooling systems necessitated by the higher temperatures Maine now experiences; and classrooms that cannot accommodate the educational services that some students need to succeed at school.

At this same time, many Maine municipalities have experienced unprecedented increases in residential property values — which is great if you are trying to sell your home but terrible if you are a long-time resident who wants to remain in your community after retirement. Declining commercial property values have exacerbated this situation in some communities.

At the same time, many people who have resided in Senate District 29 for decades worry that increasing property taxes will force them to leave their beloved homes and neighborhoods. For communities that face major school construction projects, this is a difficult math problem, especially when you add in rising cost of labor and materials to the equation.

The purpose of this bill is to add another resource that will help communities put together the financing they need to build a safe, healthy and appropriate learning environment. The current revolving school construction fund provides great support, but can only fund a few projects. And that wait list is *very* long. This bill would provide matching funds not to exceed 50%, that could help a community solve the math problem. The cost of a major school construction project would be borne by property taxpayers through municipal bonds, fundraising efforts of community

members, and a matching grant from the School Capital Improvement Fund. To my mind, it is similar to the Land For Maine's Future program, in that projects of significant importance to our state – safe, healthy and educationally appropriate K-12 school buildings – become a reality because a matching grant from the state.

Thank you for allowing me to introduce this bill today. I hope you will join me in making this investment in the future of our kids' education. I welcome any questions you may have.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letter 'A' being particularly large and stylized.

Anne Carney
State Senator, District 29