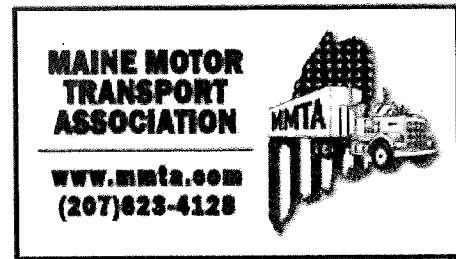


**TESTIMONY OF
Timothy Doyle
L.D. 1714, "An Act to Create a New Pathway
to Licensure to Drive School Buses"**



Good afternoon, Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and members of the Committee on Transportation. My name is Tim Doyle and I am the Vice President of the Maine Motor Transport Association and a resident of Leeds. The Association is comprised of more than 1,870-member companies, whose employees make up a large portion of the almost 34,000 people who make their living in the trucking industry in Maine.

I am here today to testify in opposition to LD 1714.

This bill seeks to create a new license to operate a school bus, without complying with the FMCSA regulations, that would currently require a class B CDL with a passenger and school bus endorsement in order to operate a school bus designed to transport 16 or more passengers including the operator. The bill would also create a process of obtaining a learner's permit to obtain such a license. You will likely hear from the Secretary of State and perhaps others regarding the administrative issues with creating such a process. I would like to oppose this bill based on safety concerns.

The regulations currently require Entry Level Driver Training (ELDT) in order to receive a CDL license, class B, and the appropriate endorsements to operate a school bus. ELDT standards have been in place, federally, since February of 2022 in an effort to standardize commercial license training across the US...and we support this training. The purpose of training to operate a class B vehicle, such as a bus, is to train to recognize the differences in operating a large vehicle. This training includes pre-trip inspection, braking, backing, and other safety training designed to keep the operator, passengers, and the motoring public safe when sharing the roadway. Passenger and school bus training also includes specific training based on carrying passengers and picking students up in the right of way. Eliminating the requirement for having to obtain a CDL in order to operate a school bus is not in keeping with the federal requirements intended to meet the ELDT safety standards.

We have heard in the past that the cost of ELDT is a barrier to obtaining the training. It is true that publicly available ELDT can cost upwards of \$9000 if obtained at a CDL School. ELDT, however, is available to be conducted by employers at a fraction of this cost. We are aware of many school districts, and other employers in the State of Maine, that have registered with the National Registry of Training Providers to conduct ELDT as an employer and who are successfully training their own drivers at this time. Some school districts have even partnered with adjacent districts and are teaming up to offer ELDT for potential bus drivers in their area.

It may sound cliché, but students *are* our most precious cargo. For the reasons previously stated we respectfully request that that you not lessen the standards for the ability to operate a class B school bus and that you vote ought not to pass on LD 1714.

Thank you for your consideration and for allowing me to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have now or at work session.