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Testimony of Rep. Kelly Murphy introducing
**LD 1097, An Act to Provide De-escalation and Behavior Intervention Training
for School Personnel**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Senator Rafferty and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Kelly Murphy, and I represent District 125, which includes part of Scarborough. I am honored to come before you today to introduce **LD 1097, An Act to Provide De-escalation and Behavior Intervention Training for School Personnel**.

Throughout this session, educators have appeared before us on many occasions expressing their deep concerns about the overall well-being of Maine's students. We have heard educators speak of the challenging and sometimes dangerous behaviors they face in the classroom, the disruption this causes for other students and for the school community and the need for the state to prioritize this issue. The bill that I am presenting before you all today is an attempt to respond to these concerns.

The bill is very straightforward. It calls for all teachers, ed techs and administrators to experience and engage in at least four hours of training on behavioral de-escalation or positive intervention training. This requirement starts with the 26-27 school year and is required every three years thereafter, except all new hires must be offered the option to participate in at least 4 hours of paid training beginning in the 27-28 school year. Additionally, this bill requires the Department of Education to maintain a list of suitable programs and vendors and requires the Department to convene educators in the field for a discussion of best practices.

The issues we are hearing about in Maine are not unique to Maine – teachers around the country report an uptick in challenging student behaviors. In the state, we have worked together to address dangerous behaviors by students, including a landmark bill passed by this Committee in 2019 that requires administrators and local unions to work together to address these behaviors whenever they occur. I understand that the Maine Education Association (MEA), Maine School Management Association (MSMA), the Maine Principals Association (MPA) and others are working together to implement this law.

However, when it comes to the issues our educators and students face, we should use a multipronged approach, and this bill is one of those prongs. Why? Because de-escalation and

behavior intervention training can avoid future conflicts in schools. In addition, the right training can help reduce and altogether avoid the further escalation of challenging behaviors from students.

Ultimately, this bill gets back to what we all want most in this Committee: we want to ensure that our teachers are able to teach – not constantly being waylaid by having to respond to the behaviors of students. I am confident that increased training of educators will produce better outcomes for teachers and students alike.

I fully understand this bill is likely to have a fiscal note, and finding the funding will be a challenge. I am committed to getting our educators the tools they need to succeed. I am convinced that high-quality de-escalation and behavior intervention training can be one solution for a multipronged strategy to address the issues we have repeatedly heard about during this session from our state's educators.