



April 23, 2025

Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Re: LD 1398 An Act Regarding Behavioral Health Support for Students in Public Schools

Chair Rafferty, Chair Murphy, and Distinguished Members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

My name is Carrie Woodcock and I am the Executive Director for Maine Parent Federation (MPF) and the parent of two children with different abilities. MPF is Maine's federally funded Parent Training and Information Center and Family-to-Family Health Information Center. We provide training and individual assistance to families of children with different abilities (especially to underserved populations) to increase access to all systems of care and increase positive outcomes.

I am testifying today in support of LD 1398 An Act Regarding Behavioral Health Support for Students in Public Schools. We have heard a lot about behavior in our schools reaching crisis levels. We have also heard that our frontline professionals in our schools are asking for and need more intensive systems of support to address this crisis.

I believe setting student-to-clinical mental health provider and student-to-school counselor ratios for the purposes of calculating salaries and benefits costs is a good step in the right direction. Increasing the number of clinical support staff in our schools will move our schools closer to having a structured systematic approach which provides training in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, Universal Design of Learning, and behavior support and includes consistent training, coaching and infrastructure throughout the year.

I urge the Committee to please pass this bill to provide our teachers with additional support to address increasing behaviors in our schools.

Respectfully,
Carrie Woodcock