

LD 1571 Testimony from William Doughty, April 25, 2025

Sen. Raffety, Rep. Murphy and Committee, my name is Bill Doughty and I live in Scarborough. I am here to oppose LD 1571 in my role as President of the Maine Alliance of Public Charter Schools, a group dedicated to improving education in Maine through charter schools.

1. This is unneeded legislation

- a. The preponderance of studies show that the connection between certification and improved student learning is unclear at best.
- b. Most of the uncertified teachers in Maine are in traditional public schools, not charter schools
 - i. There were 273 non certified teachers in Maine schools.
 - ii. 20 of them were in public charter schools.
 - iii. 253 non certified teachers are in traditional public schools, showing the critical need for teachers.
- c. This legislation would make it harder for education technicians to get certified and recertified
 - i. We need educational technicians now more than ever.
 - ii. At Fiddlehead School, one ed. Tech is assigned to every classroom as part of our services to all students. These Ed. Techs are supported by ongoing training in special education and an existing mentor program.
- d. Public charter schools are already good public schools in Maine
 - i. Two of our charter schools, the Maine Virtual Academy and Maine Connections Academy are rated in the top 10 high schools in Maine by US News and World report
 - ii. Maine Connections Academy is also rated as one of the top middle schools in Maine by the same group.
 - iii. Public Charter schools score about average on state assessments
 - 1 point better in reading
 1. 11 points worse in math
 2. 5 points better in science
- e. Maine's public charter schools have unique missions which require unique teachers and educational technicians.
 - i. The Maine Arts Academy runs a wealth of graphic design and art courses that integrate technology. These courses prepare students for jobs and higher education that did not exist 10 or even 5 years ago. Traditional teacher education programs simply cannot provide the training that's needed in these emerging areas.

- ii. Baxter Academy has a robotics program that any technical school would be proud of. You won't find robotics in the certification requirements, but those students with training in robotics are needed for jobs now and will be in the future.
 - iii. The Maine Academy of Natural Sciences has a blacksmith program, an important rural art that could disappear without such a program. There are very few blacksmith forges even at good teacher prep schools like USM or Farmington.
 - iv. Fiddlehead School has a unique outdoor education program that takes every student to an outdoor classroom site each week. The experience of our outdoor educators, both teachers and education technicians, matches well with the needs of our students and poorly with bureaucratic certification requirements.
- f. Maine's public charter schools carry out their unique missions more economically than traditional public schools
 - i. Maine spent \$20,139 on average last year for each public school student.
 - ii. Maine's public charter schools spent \$13,158 per student on average in the same time period. A difference of \$6,982 per student or almost \$7000
- g. To recap:
 - i. LD 1571 is unneeded legislation that will not improve the quality of education for anyone and will make it harder for nine of Maine's public schools to hire the unique teachers and educational technicians they need for their unique missions. LD 1571 should not pass.

Thank you.

2. Data used in this testimony is from the EASA Dashboard run by the Maine DOE for the 2023-2024 school year.

Testimony of William Doughty of Scarborough, ME speaking for the Maine Alliance of Public Charter Schools