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Testimony of Kelly Noonan Murphy Introducing
**LD 1626, An Act to Improve Professional Development for Educational
Technicians and School Support Staff**
Before the Joint Standing Committee of Education and Cultural Affairs

Senator Rafferty and fellow members of Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Kelly Murphy, and I represent District 125, which includes part of Scarborough. Today, I am proud to present **LD 1626, An Act to Improve Professional Development for Educational Technicians and School Support Staff**.

Support staff play a vital role in every school in Maine, yet we don't spend much time acknowledging the critical work they do every day, often with some of our most challenging students. Education technicians (ed techs) are the backbone of school systems throughout the state and the role they play in our schools is integral.

The bill before you is an attempt to make sure our school support staff, including ed techs, are given opportunities to learn, grow and thrive in their roles. This legislation requires at least six hours of paid professional development for ed techs and other support staff. The bill also requires a minimum level of training for school support staff, specifically requiring schools to train new hires on emergency procedures, confidentiality policies and reporting obligations.

This measure further requires ed techs to have time – paid time – to understand the individualized education program of a student with whom they are working. Most districts already do this, but the goal is for all districts to be doing this. Support staff are paid by the hour, so some districts have excluded ed techs from professional development opportunities in an effort to economize.

This bill is about providing the tools necessary for ed techs and other support staff to be successful in their work which in turn will create a supportive learning environment for student success. As we've heard, there has been a marked increase in students exhibiting dysregulated behaviors. This is the ideal time to make sure all educators, particularly ed techs, have access to the training they need to safely handle these challenging situations.

I understand this bill will have a fiscal note and that resources are scarce, but I look forward to working with all of you to find ways to further professionalize our school support staff and help them succeed in

their roles. Thank you for your time and consideration. I will happily answer any questions you may have.