



Joseph Baldacci  
Senator, District 9

**THE MAINE SENATE**  
132nd Legislature

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**Testimony from Senator Joe Baldacci**

**Presenting LD 673, "An Act to Better Support the Educational Attainment of Low-Income and Moderate-Income Communities by Providing Additional Funding to Certain School Administrative Units,"**

**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs**

**April 29, 2025**

Good afternoon Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Joe Baldacci, and I represent Senate District 9, which includes Bangor and Hermon. I am pleased today to introduce LD 673, "An Act to Better Support the Educational Attainment of Low-Income and Moderate-Income Communities by Providing Additional Funding to Certain School Administrative Units."

I believe, like everyone here, that we need to set up our educators, students and staff up for success. However, for a myriad of reasons, there are disparities in the amount of funding allocated to different schools and school districts. Having more money or being in a more affluent area of the state will normally also come with additional resources that may not be available in less-well-funded areas. Underfunded schools, however, often have limited resources, leading to fewer advanced classes, fewer extracurricular activities, and less access to qualified teachers and staff.

While I am thrilled that Maine continues to fund 55% of public education costs, there is still more we can do. Addressing the unfortunate disparities in public education requires taking a hard look at gaps in funding and coming up with solutions to ensure that we give all of our students the opportunity to reach their full potential. While it may be a lofty dream that all schools in the state would have access to the same amount of programs and funding, my hope is that this legislation can start to even out some of those deficiencies.

This bill creates the Educational Opportunity Grant Program to provide grants to school administrative units in which the average personal income of the member municipalities is below the state average for programs designed to raise educational standards. My hope is that through these grants, we can better support our underfunded communities and improve existing programs.

I thank you all for your time and consideration, and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.