



**MAINE MUNICIPAL
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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Support Of

LD 933 - *An Act to Increase to 100 Percent the State Share of Funding for Special Education Costs of All School Administrative Units*

April 29, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and members of the Education & Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Rebecca Lambert, and I am providing testimony in strong support of LD 933 on behalf of the Maine Municipal Association's (MMA) elected 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC). MMA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit member service organization and aims to help provide policy solutions that work for all residents in Maine and the LPC guides the advocacy efforts and establishes positions on bills of municipal interest.

First, a sincere thank you goes to Rep. Dill for sponsoring this legislation on behalf of MMA's Legislative Policy Committee, who greatly appreciates the support for local government.

Special education costs can not only be significant but are often unpredictable and beyond local control. These services are federally mandated and essential to ensuring that every student, regardless of need, receives a fair and appropriate education. Yet the financial responsibility for fulfilling these mandates has fallen largely on cities and towns, straining local budgets and forcing impossible choices between funding essential educational services and maintaining municipal operations or other critical infrastructure.

Municipalities have no ability to control how many students require, or will require, special education services, the complexity of those services, or the associated costs, which can vary dramatically from year to year. A single out of district placement has the potential to blow up an otherwise carefully crafted budget. Despite having a commitment to every child's success, local governments and school districts are left scrambling to fund vital programs, often resulting in higher property taxes, cuts to general education, or delayed investment in infrastructure or public safety.

Fully funding special education at the state level in all school districts would reflect a true partnership between state and local government and one that recognizes the unique needs of special education students while respecting the fiscal realities that our cities and towns face.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of this proposal.



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