

132nd Legislature
Senate of
Maine
Senate District 29

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Testimony of Senator Anne Carney in support of
**LD 1087, “An Act to Increase the State's Share of Major Capital School
Construction Costs,”**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
May 6, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and esteemed members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, I am Senator Anne Carney, proudly representing Senate District 29, which includes South Portland, Cape Elizabeth and part of Scarborough. Today, I am pleased to testify as a Co-Sponsor of LD 1087, “An Act to Increase the State's Share of Major Capital School Construction Costs.”

One of the urgent issues affecting the communities I represent and many others across the state is the need to replace school buildings — and how to pay for this vital infrastructure. I’ve sponsored a bill before the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee to authorize a bond that would help communities pay for school building projects. This bill would be another tool to maximize the State’s ability to help fund school construction project throughout Maine.

Many Maine communities face a common issue — deteriorating school buildings that no longer provide a safe, healthy and appropriate learning environment. These school buildings have wide glass doors instead of locking vestibules; they have mold and aging heating systems, instead of dry ceilings and cooling systems necessitated by the higher temperatures Maine now experiences during the school year; and they have classrooms that cannot accommodate the educational services that some students need to succeed at school.

At the same time, many Maine municipalities have experienced unprecedented increases in residential property values — which is great if you are trying to sell your home but terrible if you are a long-time resident who wants to remain in your community after retirement. In some communities, declining commercial property values have exacerbated this situation.

Many people who have resided in Senate District 29 for decades worry that increasing property taxes will force them to leave their beloved homes and neighborhoods. For communities that face major school construction projects, this is a difficult math problem, especially when you add in the rising costs of labor and materials to the equation.

This bill would add another resource to help communities put together the financing they need to build a safe, healthy and modern learning environment. The current revolving school construction fund provides great support, but can only fund a few projects. And that waitlist is *very* long. This bill would help stretch the state's resources across more schools in more communities. In turn, taxpayers in more towns and cities would get help paying for these vital new school buildings.

The provisions in this legislation would help to ensure the state funding is distributed more equitably, as well. Specifically, school districts who receive greater funding from the State, which tend to have less local capacity to pay, would be eligible for a greater share of construction funding from the state.

School districts throughout our state need *some* help replacing deteriorating, unsafe schools. I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1087, "An Act to Increase the State's Share of Major Capital School Construction Costs."

Thank you for your time and consideration today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

Anne Carney
State Senator, District 29