



Maine Women's Lobby

February 24, 2026

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education,

I join you today on behalf of the Maine Women's Lobby. For almost fifty years, the Maine Women's Lobby has worked to build gender justice in Maine through legislative advocacy and systems change.

We are here today in support of **LD 2192, An Act to Protect Students by Ensuring Schools Have Complete Information About School Employees and Applicants for Employment** and thank Senator Rotundo for sponsoring this important bill.

Women and girls are disproportionately impacted by sexual harassment at work and at school, and sexual violence more broadly¹. In the most recent Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey, more than one in five Maine girls reported unwanted sexual contact in their lifetime, and for some demographics, such as trans girls, the rate is twice that². This can lead to a lifetime of trauma, which may result in disordered eating, chronic illness, substance use, and more.

While we all agree that sexual violence is a problem, we know from the headlines that it is so often overlooked and ignored, and when people report their experiences it may take months or even years for the engine of justice to fire up. Even then, survivors share their stories, and hear the echo of confirmation from other survivors, and still systems look the other way. The administrative burden is sometimes simply too high to scale, or the legal complications don't leave the door open for real accountability.

Too often, when school systems allow individuals to quietly move between districts after allegations or investigations, it is women and girls who bear the brunt of the harm and the life-long impacts of trauma. Women leave jobs. Girls disengage from school. Careers and educational opportunities are disrupted. But surely we can do better.

LD 2192 would correct gaps in the system to protect both students and staff from harassment and misconduct. By requiring applicants to disclose past investigations, requiring information sharing with the department about investigations, creating a backstop to ensure that investigations are completed, and prohibiting agreements that suppress misconduct information, LD 2192 makes it harder for bad actors to move from school to school. These are practical, commonsense safeguard, which is why eighteen other states and Washington DC have enacted similar measures.

¹ Dumont, R & Shaler, G. (2015). Maine Crime Victimization Report: Informing public policy for safer communities. Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine

² Maine Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2025). Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey.

While ensuring the safety of children is central to this bill, the bill also strengthens protections for educators and school employees, 75% of whom are women. Everyone deserves to go to school and to work without fear of harassment, abuse, or retaliation.

When abusers don't move on or systems fail to ensure accountability, survivors are forced to by leaving jobs, schools, or seeking closure through their own time and expense. But a just system does not force survivors to "move on" in order to be safe. It creates structures that prevent harm in the first place. LD 2192 moves Maine schools - and our children and educators - closer to a safer, more just approach.

We urge you to vote **Ought to Pass** on **LD 2192**.

Destie Hohman Sprague

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