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February 15, 2017

Good afternoon Senator Langley, Representative Kornfield, and fellow Members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. I am Senator Rebecca Millett, representing District 29, which includes South Portland, Cape Elizabeth, and part of Scarborough. I am pleased to present LD 40, "An Act to Strengthen Requirements for Water Testing for Schools."

Over the past couple of years we've all heard more and more about the dangers of lead in our children's drinking water. Unfortunately, those dangers aren't just present for kids and families in other states or on the nightly news. This fall, that news came from much closer to home – Yarmouth Public Schools discovered lead levels higher than the standards set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at some of the drinking fountains and faucets at Yarmouth Elementary School. Then we learned about the Benton elementary school with results at 40 times the federal standard.

Because Yarmouth and Benton elementary schools get their water from a public water system, the Kennebec and Yarmouth Water Districts, they had not been held to the same testing standards that schools that get their water from wells are. Schools that get their water from wells must test for lead at least once every three years. This bill would bring other Maine schools to that standard.

We know that no level of lead is safe for our children and that exposure to lead can lead to impaired development, especially for developing brains. We should ensure that our kids aren't being exposed to lead, no matter where their water comes from or the pipes it travels through. Old plumbing in our schools can leach lead and copper into water, even if the public water supply is safe. After some conversations about the bill, I would like to remove the reference to schools buildings more than 10 years old.

We often say that our kids deserve a good education, no matter their zip code. Let's add to that – our kids all deserve not to be exposed to lead, no matter their water supply.

Thank you for your consideration and I am happy to answer any questions.