

TESTIMONY REGARDING

L.D. 277

AN ACT TO DISCONTINUE THE USE OF THE SAT IN MAINE SCHOOLS

Senator Daughtry, Representative Brennan and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Victoria Wallack, director of communications and government relations for Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association. MSBA voted to support this bill and MSSA is opposed.

While our associations took opposite positions on this bill, there were some common themes that warrant consideration.

It is important to note at the onset that there is no state-sponsored SAT in public high schools anymore, and it is a local decision around whether the school district pays for the test, or the student and their parents do.

A question raised by both School Boards and superintendents was whether the SATs still hold sway in college admissions. The University System and Community Colleges do not require them, and it's up to students if they want to submit SAT scores on their application. The private colleges like Bowdoin and Colby are also "test optional", but say on their websites that students can choose whether or not to submit SAT and ACT scores.

Superintendents were concerned students would be at a disadvantage for higher education admission if they didn't take the test. They wanted to make sure this bill would not prohibit the use of the SAT. Their belief is that in a competitive situation, a high SAT score would still give students an edge, whether it is required or not.

School Boards said the SAT is no longer an appropriate test because of what it measures. The emphasis now should be on a test that helps identify where students need support to help meet the state's Learning Standards. Tests like the Accuplacer, Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) test or an alternative growth model assessment give a snapshot in time and inform what individual students need to move ahead in their learning.