

TESTIMONY

In support of

**LD 350: An Act To Increase the Number of Courses Regarding
Autism Spectrum Disorder That Count toward Special Education Certification
March 22, 2021**

Senator Daughtry, Representative Brennan and other esteemed members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Daniel Allen, and I am the Instruction and Professional Development director for the Maine Education Association (MEA) which represents 24,000 teachers, education support professionals, and retired educators across Maine.

I am here to testify in support of LD 350: An Act To Increase the Number of Courses Regarding Autism Spectrum Disorder That Count toward Special Education Certification.

My job at the MEA is to provide our members with the professional development they need. We do that by surveying our members and we often find Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) high on the list of requested topics. Our members, especially our special educators, obviously find this to be very important and believe they need to understand ASD in more depth to better serve their students.

ASD affects an estimated 1 in 54 children across all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). ASD is a developmental disability that can cause significant communication, social, and behavioral issues which can dramatically impact learning. MEA believes its prevalence requires us to know more about this disability in order to support our students.

This change in the law would not require educators to take the courses but would make it possible for a study of ASD to be a greater part of a special educator's training for certification purposes. MEA believes this would make those educators more effective and more valuable to their students and districts.

For these reasons, the MEA encourages you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 350.