

Constance Mazelsky  
Falmouth

March 22, 2021

Testimony in Support of LD 552 "An Act to Strengthen the Individualized Education Program Process"

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and the distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Constance Mazelsky and I am the mother of two students who had Individualized Education Plans for most of their respective educations.

I support the change to Section 2 of this Act because parents need a 7-day advance notification if their school district will be bringing a lawyer to an IEP meeting. When we asked our school district to support an alternative placement for our child with significant learning and support needs — the school district brought in a lawyer to the IEP meeting, giving us less than 24 hours' notice, resulting in an unfair situation.

I support the change to Section 3 of this Act because outcomes improve when parents are equal partners in their children's special education process.

In Maine, substantial taxpayer dollars are spent on sophisticated legal representation on behalf of the school district. Parents are often at a disadvantage in terms of how most effectively to navigate the special education process and how best to influence the educational programming delivered to their children. Very often, parents are disadvantaged by the financial resources and expertise at the disposal of the school districts.

I ask you to support LD 552 because children with special educational needs, and their parents, deserve more, not less support from public schools. Strengthening the IEP process can only improve education for children in Maine, which helps everyone.

Thank you for allowing me to submit this testimony in support of LD 552.

— Constance Mazelsky  
Falmouth, Maine