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**Testimony by State Senator Matthea Daughtry on LD 880
*An Act To Protect School Employees from Workplace Bullying***

Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Monday, April 5, 2021

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Distinguished Colleagues of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Mattie Daughtry and I am the State Senator for Senate District #24, which includes the towns of Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, North Yarmouth, and Pownal. I am pleased to present LD 880, *An Act To Protect School Employees from Workplace Bullying*.

I think we can all agree that our schools can and should be places free from bullying and intimidation of any kind. In my years serving on this Committee as a member of the House, we have often attempted to provide greater protections for students against bullying, and we have made great progress in trying to embed in our state laws clear prohibitions against bullying, harassment and school-based intimidation. LD 880 is a continuation of that progress. LD 880 is a simple bill: it simply includes school employees in the current language against bullying in schools.

I won't focus today on any specific incidents of bullying against school employees because I am sure we all have examples. What I do know is that many people in our schools are doing their very best to help students during this time, an unprecedented time in our history, and they deserve to feel protected and supported. Hopefully, in most schools, everyone is working together to meet the needs of students.

I ask that we pass LD 880 to try to protect more school employees. If this bill helps even one employee feel safer in their workplace, we will have succeeded. Protecting school employees against workplace bullying seems like the least we can do to ensure our schools are safe places for students and our school staff.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this bill. I am happy to answer any questions.