

## TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO

L.D. 429

### AN ACT TO PROTECT THE HEALTH OF STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS BY REQUIRING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEES IN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Eileen King, deputy executive director of Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association in opposition to L.D. 429.

We are not opposed to the intention of this bill, but see the proposal as redundant. Education law, 20-A, §1001 ¶16. Comprehensive *Emergency Management Plan* already requires such committees and they are being used to deal with COVID.

The law says:

16. Comprehensive emergency management plan. Each school board shall annually approve a comprehensive emergency management plan developed by the school unit administration working with school teachers and staff and local, county and state public safety officials, fire-fighting personnel, emergency management officials, mental health officials and law enforcement officials to identify and deal with all hazards and potential hazards that could reasonably be expected to affect a facility or unit under the authority of the school administrative unit. The approval of a comprehensive emergency management plan under this subsection is public information. The following information pertaining to a comprehensive emergency management plan is public information:

If you want to assure continued, robust participation in response to COVID, it makes sense to work with a structure that already exists.

We also believe that communication can be further supported through a group of what we call our “educational partners,” which includes the Maine Education Association, Maine Principals’ Association, MSBA, MSSA, MADSEC, representing special education directors, DOE Commissioner Makin, Assistant Commissioner Chuta, and members of the DOE staff. We meet weekly via Zoom and have throughout the pandemic.