

TESTIMONY

Neither for nor against

LD 1189: An Act To Amend the Teacher Certification Statutes, as Amended

**Dan Allen, Professional Development Director, Maine Education Association
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing**

April 7, 2021

Senator Rafferty, 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 neither for nor against LD 1189, An Act To Amend the Teacher Certification Statutes, as amended.

We believe the changes proposed in LD 1189 are necessary and appropriate in preparation for changes that are being proposed for Chapter 115. However, we have not yet seen Chapter 115 and do not know how the changes offered in this bill will affect that document, or how the changes in Chapter 115 brought about the proposed changes offered in LD 1189. So, it is difficult for us to comment on specifics.

We are confident that the Department of Education will produce a bill outlining changes to Chapter 115 that will streamline and fortify Maine's educator certification rules and we look forward to reviewing that document.

One concern we have with LD 1189 is the removal of the special education consultant and speech language clinician from the definition of Educational Specialist in the law. These positions are covered in the recognition clauses in some of our contracts and we want to avoid any negative impacts the changes might have on educators who hold those positions. The department has informed us that they believe even if those positions are removed from statute, individuals with those certifications can continue to renew them. We hope that is the case.

We appreciate the changes made in the amended bill to be sure we credential educational technicians in such a way as they are appropriately placed in either Social Security or the Maine State Retirement System and we appreciate the efforts of the DOE and Department of Labor in making sure that was done correctly.

We look forward to seeing the revision of Chapter 115 and hope that this bill will pave the way for useful changes to our certification rules.