

TESTIMONY

In Support of

LD 1188: An Act To Include Librarians and Career and Technical Education Teachers in the Minimum \$40,000 Salary Initiative

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Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

April 12th, 2021

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and other members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

My name is John Kosinski, and I am here on behalf of the Maine Education Association (MEA) to testify in support of LD 1188, An Act To Include Librarians and Career and Technical Education Teachers in the Minimum \$40,000 Salary Initiative.

The MEA appreciates the efforts last session to finally lift the minimum teacher salary in our state to \$40,000. The sponsor of this bill advocated for this change for years. The change was long overdue, and we are impatient to see it finally realized. Currently, the minimum teacher salary is set at \$35,000, and that will increase to \$37,500 by next school year and finally the new minimum salary of \$40,000 will take effect in the 2022-2023 school year.

LD 1188 is intended to correct a minor oversight in the increase in the minimum teacher salary. The MEA represents public school teachers and other certified professionals in public schools in almost every public school in Maine and the only category of certified educator who has raised concerns about being excluded are the teachers/instructors in our state's CTE Regions.

As we understand, the current version of the law specifically references "school administrative units" and therefore the current law does not apply to CTE regions since they fall outside of that definition. Here is the language currently found in law, Title 20-A:

§13407. Minimum salaries beginning in 2020-2021 school year

Each school administrative unit shall establish a minimum salary for certified teachers as follows:

CTE centers are part of school administrative units and therefore the minimum teacher salary applies to those instructors/teachers, but just not those in the CTE regions since these schools fall outside of this definition.

According to the Maine Department of Education, Maine currently has 27 CTE centers and regions around the state, providing valuable educational opportunities and workforce training for Maine's students.¹ They do a phenomenal job of supporting students with limited funding. 19 of these schools are "centers" where the minimum teacher salary would apply, but 8 are "regions" and therefore the current language does not apply. These regions can be found in Houlton, Lincoln, Bangor, Waldo, Rockland, Mexico, Brunswick, and Norway. We hope leaving these instructors out was an oversight that can be rectified by this bill.

I must note, when the Department of Education released a Priority Notice: Verification of Minimum Teacher Salaries in November of 2020, a few specific job classes were left off this list of qualified positions, including school nurses, occupational therapists, and speech and language pathologists.² While these positions were left off the list of eligible positions, we have no evidence of any of these positions being paid less than the \$40,000 minimum teacher salary.

The original version of the bill also proposes to extend the minimum teacher salary to school librarians, but we believe that issue is now moot, and all librarians certified to work in Maine's schools should be covered under the existing statute.

Thank you for your time and attention and I am more than happy to try to answer any questions you may have.

¹ For a full list of CTE Regions and Centers in Maine, please see the Maine Department of Education website found here: [Career and Technical Education Schools | Department of Education \(maine.gov\)](#)

² Please see Priority Notice: Verification of Minimum Teacher Salaries, November 30, 2020 found here: [PRIORITY NOTICE: Verification of Minimum Teacher Salaries – Maine DOE Newsroom](#)