

Stephanie Erickson  
Newry

Esteemed members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Stephanie Erickson, and I am a resident and school board member in S.A.D. 44 in Oxford County. I am urging you to vote ought not to pass on LD 1343 and 1426.

Education Savings Accounts have historically involved legal challenges and brought on tension between public and private/home education.

Shortly after ESAs were implemented in Arizona the Arizona Teacher's Union challenged their legality. Nevada faced 2 lawsuits, an injunction, and their ESA law was ultimately repealed in 2019. And, in 2020 A Tennessee judge ruled their ESA program unconstitutional.

Legal challenges aside, taxpayer funded ESAs lay the groundwork for government regulation on home education. In a 2017 article published in the Des Moines Register titled, Why Education Savings Accounts are Bad for Iowa, the writer bullet points that ESAs "have no accountability to the state or taxpayers." In other words, before the legislature had even voted on ESAs, Iowa taxpayers began to call for State oversight on private and homeschool education should taxpayer money be utilized. This eventual implementation of government oversight was seen in Nevada's ESA Funding Bill that was amended to impose several regulations on both private and home education.

Lastly, Maine should not be endeavoring to fund private home education when remote learning within the public school system is in complete disarray. There is currently a very real need within the public school system to support remote learning students. It seems appropriate to fix these gaps rather than shift focus to private education while leaving these remote learners behind.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 1343 and 1426.