



Maine Municipal  
Association

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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Opposition of

LD 1426 – *An Act To Provide for the Equitable Funding of Education Chosen by Maine Families*

April 27, 2021

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Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Neal Goldberg, and I am providing testimony in opposition of LD 1426 on behalf of MMA's Legislative Policy Committee.

The Association objects to the bill's repeal of the restriction on providing public school funds to sectarian schools. Municipal officials do not want taxpayer dollars expended on these educational institutions.

The directives contained in Section 2 of LD 1426 have merit in the eyes of some members. Adding per-pupil rates calculated for each school administrative unit (SAU) as the "lesser" option for determining payments to students not attending public school in that SAU would benefit municipalities that fund SAUs with minimum budgets or that have low tax bases. This would reduce the burden on communities that can least afford to fund education alternatives like expensive tutoring or private schools. The opposite is true for municipalities where the calculated per-pupil rate will be above the payment currently provided to students not attending public school in that SAU. The payment increase from municipalities with high tax bases or well-funded SAUs is hard to justify to communities that already carry a disproportionate burden to fund SAUs.

Regardless of how the committee feels about the net impact of per-pupil calculations, it should strike the bill's repeal of the restriction on providing public school funds to sectarian schools.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this important matter.