

**MAINE
PRINCIPALS'
ASSOCIATION**



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TO: Joint Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
FROM: Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee
**RE: Neither For Nor Against LD 1373: An Act to Keep All
Maine Students Safe by Restricting the Use of Seclusion
and Restraint in Schools as AMENDED**
DATE: May 4, 2021

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Dr. Holly Couturier and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Principals' Association – Professional Division. We represent more than 800 PreK-12 principals and assistant principals of public and private schools in Maine.

The MPA Legislative Committee is neither for nor against the LD 1373 as amended. While all measures are taken place to support students who may need support, there are times when a student's actions are violent, and they potentially could cause physical harm to themselves or others. During these dangerous times, it is necessary for a trained educator to physically restrain a student until he/she calms down and is safe. We think the amended language addresses this concern.

We do have a concern regarding the definition of "seclusion." Currently, if a student must be removed from a classroom and placed into a safe space with an adult, this is not seclusion – the student will not be alone. Should LD 1373 pass, even if an adult is in the room with the student, if the student "feels" like they cannot leave the space, this would now be considered "seclusion." This would potentially limit the use of a cool-down or reflection room – a strategy that can be effective in calming a student down.

For these reasons the MPA is neither for nor against LD 1373.