

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO

L.D. 1373

AN ACT TO KEEP ALL MAINE STUDENTS SAFE BY RESTRICTING THE USE OF SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT IN SCHOOLS

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Eileen King, deputy executive director of Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association in opposition to L.D. 1373 because we believe the bill is unnecessary.

Standards around restraint and seclusion are found in Department of Education Rule, Chapter 33, a rule that was updated in 2013 with substantial input from a working group that included MSMA, on behalf of school boards and superintendents, the Maine Disabilities Rights Center, Maine Education Association, Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities and the Maine Principals' Association.

Because of the collaborative work we did, the Education Committee gave its unanimous support to the rule change, and it passed the House and the Senate with a unanimous vote in both bodies.

Much of what is being requested in the latest iteration of L.D. 1373 is in that rule, which is a testament to the good work done by that working group and the DOE.

We support better training in the field around restraint and seclusion and welcome the help of DOE and its Maine Safety Center to make that happen. We also can use our direct communication with superintendents and the monthly meetings of the nine regional superintendent groups in the state to get the word out about training and discern what is working and what is not.

Existing rule, Section 10, Cumulative Reporting, also calls for building level reporting on restraint and seclusion, and reporting those numbers up to the DOE. We look to the department to tell us how that can be done more efficiently and effectively.