

Christine Greenier  
Hampden

Testimony of Christine Greenier, Retired School Nutrition Director, RSU 22  
In Support of LD 1679

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Christine Greenier. I am a resident of Hampden and a retired School Nutrition Director in RSU 22 serving Hampden, Winterport, Newburgh and Frankfort. I worked 30 years in this position.

Today, I'm submitting testimony in support of LD 1679. I want to thank the bill sponsors for your commitment to addressing childhood hunger in Maine.

Feeding the children in our state is a passion of mine. All children, regardless of socio-economic status, need to be healthfully nourished in order to learn and succeed. Unfortunately supporting the nutrition of our students has not always been a priority of school administration in our state and country. This is just wrong. There should be no hungry kids in Maine, and just like bussing students, providing books, and other tools for educating kids, providing nutritious meals at no cost to families should have equal priority with every other aspect of education.

I have witnessed childhood hunger first hand. I've seen kids visiting the school nurse with headaches and other physical results of empty bellies. I've seen kids suffer the stigma of being a FREE student because their families cannot afford to pay. I've spent endless hours trying to collect payment from families, that may be well able to pay, but choose not to for many reasons. The list goes on and it is just wrong!!

If nothing else, the Covid Pandemic has demonstrated that it is not only possible to provide breakfast, lunch, and snacks to all kids free of charge, but very do-able. We need to learn from this. The timing is perfect for Maine to step forward and be a leader in recognizing the importance of good nutrition as one of the most important parts of the education of all Maine children. In my 30 years in School Nutrition, Maine has always been in the forefront of excellence in School Nutrition.

It should be simple. Think of your own children, grandchildren, neighbors, and friends. Don't they all deserve the best that Maine has to offer for successfully educating and loving the children of this great state. Please step up and vote to help this bill to come to fruition. Thank you so much for your consideration and commitment to the children of Maine.

Christine Greenier  
Retired School Nutrition Director  
Consultant with No Kid Hungry and Full Plate Full Potential