

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

L.D. 1632

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Lucy Richard
MSAD 1

PRESIDENT-ELECT

Peggy Lembo-Splaine
Boothbay-Boothbay Harbor
CSD

VICE PRESIDENT

Jane Osborne
Deer Isle-Stonington CSD

**IMMEDIATE PAST
PRESIDENT**

Becky Fles
MSAD 11

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Steven W. Bailey

**MAINE COUNCIL OF
SCHOOL BOARD
ATTORNEYS**

Nat Bessey, Esq., Chair

**AN ACT TO UPDATE THE LAWS REGARDING THE MAINE
EDUCATIONAL CENTER FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
AND THE GOVERNOR BAXTER SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Steven Bailey, executive director of the Maine School Boards Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committee of the Maine School Boards Association in support of L.D. 1632.

Our understanding is this bill essentially reorganizes the programs for the deaf and hard of hearing to best serve students and families. It replaces the center's school and satellite programs with a pre-school program based on Mackworth Island, where tuition will be free, and two site-based programs, one each in the Brewer and Portland school districts. This essentially provides programs for both ends of the state.

We appreciate that under this bill school districts will get credit in their head count for state funding purposes for the students they send to the Brewer and Portland sites.

The bill also better defines services that will be provided at the site-based programs and clearly defines funding responsibility that is essentially shared between the Legislature and school administrative units.

Finally the bill requires the Governor Baxter School to do statewide outreach to help identify those students who could benefit from the program – outreach which we believe will help assure more students are getting the services they need.