

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

L.D. 1183

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE SCHOOL MEAL EQUIPMENT
AND PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT FUND

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Michael Buescher, Esq., Chair

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. 1183.

School boards support this bill because it supports our efforts to feed our students. It does this by creating a fund under the auspices of the Department of Education to provide grants to purchase school equipment, improve food safety, and expand the school lunch and breakfast programs. It also recognizes that some of our students have dietary restrictions and we need to be able to prepare meals that meet those restrictions.

The value of schools feeding kids was highlighted during the pandemic, when there was no school. Where possible, cafeterias were staffed to make sure food was prepared and distributed to families who relied on school meals to help keep their children fed.

Not all or even most food programs break even so subsidy is essential. We support the department going after federal grants for food service programs to support the essential role schools play in keeping students fed so they can learn.