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TESTIMONY NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST

L.D. 348

ACT TO MAKE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS AVAILABLE IN CERTAIN SCHOOLS

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Victoria Wallack, communications and government relations director for Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association, neither for nor against L.D. 348.

Our associations are neither for nor against this proposal because our support for a similar bill heard last session ultimately got nowhere because there was no funding attached. Without that funding it was deemed a mandate and failed to get the necessary number of votes in the 130th Legislature.

We do recognize the need to have free products available, particularly for families who are on limited incomes. The affordability issue is very real. The prices of these products rose on average by an estimated 10 percent in 2022, according to news reports.

It was also noted in last year's hearing that some students miss school when they are menstruating because they can't afford the products.

Making them available in schools, often through the nurse's office, is the right approach. For all we do to try to support school attendance, this is a simple fix that should be properly funded and deserves your support.