

Geoffrey Wingard
Orono
LD 1284

Dear Representatives,

My name is Geoff Wingard. I am the 2022 Gilder Lehrman Maine History Teacher of the Year and department head of the History Department at Bangor High School. I have been a secondary and post-secondary educator for over twenty years. Thank you for considering the importance of personal finance instruction in Maine's schools.

I am writing today to urge you to support LD1284, "An Act to Require Personal Finance to be Taught as a Separate Course to Obtain a High School Diploma." I think we can all agree that young adults in Maine must be equipped to navigate tumultuous financial times and be provided with a framework to make sound financial decisions that may impact their lives well into the future.

This bill will guarantee that all Maine high school students will benefit from this potentially life-changing instruction. At the school where I teach we experimented with integrating personal finance instruction in other social studies classes and found that trying to shoehorn more content into already rigorous courses diluted the content of existing courses and did not meet our curricular goals or the Maine Learning Results standards for personal finance. What we learned is that high quality personal finance education requires time and emphasis. For the past three years we have taught the course as a stand alone, semester-long personal finance class for all 10th graders. I hope that all Maine students, not just students in my district who already have this course as a standalone graduation standard, are able to receive instruction in this critical area. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to the successful passage of LD1284.

Sincerely,
Geoffrey Wingard