



MAINE COUNSELING ASSOCIATION

A State Branch of the American Counseling Association

January 10, 2024

Testimony in Support of LD 2002 An Act to Provide Incentives to Schools That Contract for Certain Social Work and Family Therapy Services

Senator Joseph Rafferty, Representative Michael Brennan, and members of the
Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Stan Pelletier, I am a certified School (guidance) Counselor and
Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC), and have worked in Maine
Schools and communities for over 25 years. I am also the Public Policy Chair for
the Maine Counseling Association (MeCA), a state branch of the American
Counseling Association (ACA), an organization representing professional
counselors including school counselors and licensed mental health counselors. It is
in this capacity that I express the support of the MeCA Executive Board for LD
2002, along with some comments and requests for clarification of some points.

We are pleased that Maine Legislators are seriously considering ways to support
our students and families by augmenting the supports and services available in
schools for their mental health and well-being. We support the intent expressed in
the legislation to authorize contracted social work and family therapy services for
students in need. Though the nature of specific contracted mental health services to
be provided is not detailed extensively in the legislation as written, it appears to
include clinical counseling/therapy services. Presuming this is the case, we ask that
the list in section 1 following the statement “services provided as authorized by
this section must be provided by an individual with one of the following licenses”
be amended to include other appropriately licensed and credentialed mental health
professionals who may provide clinical services, such as Licensed Clinical
Professional Counselors (LCPCs).

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This would be in keeping with recommendations we have made with respect to other recent legislative documents that have been considered by the Education and Cultural Affairs committee such as Chapter 117. Our suggestions here as well as in these other recent instances directly relate to the provision of clinical mental health services in schools in recognition that some clinical services are provided by professionals who are not social workers or LMFTs (e.g., LCPCs, psychologists). We ask that the list of providers delineated in section 1 be expanded to include these other professionals who are appropriately licensed and qualified to provide the other contracted clinical services seemingly intended to be covered by LD 2002.

In closing, let me say that we welcome thoughtful attempts by the legislature to assist with the implementation of behavioral and mental health services in schools, and to support counselors, social workers, marriage and family therapists, and other clinical providers in carrying out their vital functions in service to students and families in Maine public schools. We, the members of the Executive Board of the Maine Counseling Association, are ready to assist and consult with members of the legislature if called upon. We are committed as an organization to upholding the standards of professionalism of counselors in service to Maine students, families, and schools. Thank you for your time and attention, and for the opportunity to share our views with the membership of the Legislative Committee.

Best regards,

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