

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

L.D. 808

AN ACT TO AMEND LAWS AFFECTING TUITION AT STATE-APPROVED SCHOOLS

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Victoria Wallack, Director of Communications and Government Relations at Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association in support of L.D. 808.

Enrollment counts for school administrative units are expected to occur October 1 of each year. These get verified by the end of October with the data then being used for the Maine Department of Education finance department to include in the preparation of the ED 279s for each district. These reports indicate the allocation of state subsidy for each district, with a major factor being the average enrollment for the past two school years as a basis for the allocation for the next fiscal year.

Students in Maine have become very mobile, and districts are seeing significant fluctuation in students enrolling in their schools after the October student count deadline. With the basis for state subsidy based on student count, these additional students create an additional financial challenge for districts who have not previously planned within their budgets for these students. This is especially true for students who become residents of towns that have school choice and pay tuition at the Maximum Allowable Tuition rate to a school of the choice of the family. With many students enrolling after the October 1 student count deadline, this contributes to tens and possible hundreds of thousands of dollars in unanticipated tuition expense to these districts.

L.D. 808 requests that districts that have a student count that exceeds the October 1 count receive additional subsidy to help foot the bill for these students. Payment to the district for these students would be made by the state in the second year following the enrollment of the student to allow for the accounting and creating of a subsidy adjustment for each school administrative unit.

There remain some questions as to when the spring count would be made and reported to the Maine Department of Education and how to consider prorated payment for students who were present for only a portion of the year. Even with these questions, the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and the Maine School Superintendents Association urge you to vote ought to pass on L.D. 808.