

Janet T. Mills
Governor

Jeanne M. Lambrew, Ph.D.
Commissioner



Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Child and Family Services
11 State House Station
2 Anthony Avenue
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011
Tel.: (207) 624-7900; Toll Free: (877) 680-5866
TTY: Dial 711 (Maine Relay); Fax: (207) 624-5553

Testimony of
Todd A. Landry, Ed.D., Director
Office of Child and Family Services
Department of Health and Human Services

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

LD 762 – An Act To Clarify the Response to Truancy under the Child and Family Services and
Child Protection Act

Hearing Date: March 29, 2021

Good Afternoon Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Joint Standing
Committee on Health and Human Services:

I am Todd Landry, Director of the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) within the
Department of Health and Human Services and I am here today to introduce and testify in
support of LD 762, An Act To Clarify the Response to Truancy under the Child and Family
Services and Child Protection Act. This bill amends definitions in the Child and Family Services
and Child Protection Act to update cross-references to Title 20-A based on changes made
recently to the truancy statutes.

This bill is rather straightforward in that it seeks to correct cross-references and ensure OCFS
retains the authority to intervene in situations involving truancy (as defined in Title 20-A). In
addition, OCFS is requesting the committee consider an amendment to the current language of
LD 762. Specifically, in Section 3 of the bill, at the end of the sentence that currently ends with a
reference to paragraphs C or D, we propose inserting additional language of “when truancy is the
result of neglect by a person responsible for the child”. The Department originally drafted this
bill in early September and since that time we have experienced a significant increase in reports
of truancy due primarily to pandemic-related challenges in remote schooling, school attendance,
etc. The Office of the Attorney General brought forward concerns that additional language was
needed to clarify that OCFS has a role to intervene with families in situations where truancy is
the result of neglect, and not the result of other issues such as medical concerns, illness, etc.
After careful review we agree with their position. Although the pandemic has brought this issue
to the forefront, we believe this additional language provides much needed clarity because the
statute as currently written indicates jeopardy can be evidenced by deprivation of education
without requiring that the deprivation be caused by parental neglect.

I urge you to support LD 762, including our proposed amendment. Thank you for the
opportunity to testify before you today. I’m happy to answer any questions you may have.