

Testimony of Barbara LaVallee, RDH, IPDH

In Support of LD 1501

Dear Committee Members:

I am asking for your support of LD 1501. I have been a dental hygienist for more than 20 years, most of this time spent working in school systems throughout the state. I have seen troubling rates of tooth decay year after year, sometimes as high as 30%. Often children are in need of urgent treatment due to severe pain or infection. School screenings allow us to prevent dental disease and/or identify it in the early stages. Early identification allows school nurses and social workers to connect families with local resources. We know that poor oral health causes needless pain and negatively affects students' learning. All this is occurring despite the fact that tooth decay is a preventable disease. It is crucial that we restore oral health capacity within the state, and I ask for your support in expanding the state's School Oral Health Program.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Barbara C. LaVallee, RDH, IPDH  
Raymond, ME