

MAINE PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION



50 Industrial Drive
Augusta, Maine 04330
(207) 622-0217

Email: mpa@mpa.cc

Websites:
<https://mpaprof.org>
<https://mpa.cc>

Kimberly Liscomb
Cony Middle/High
School
President

Stephen Bell
Dexter Regional High
School
President-elect

Michael R. Burnham
Executive Director
Interscholastic Division

Holly D. Blair
Executive Director
Professional Division

Michael G. Bisson
Assistant Director

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TO: Committee on Judiciary
FROM: Maine Principals' Association Legislative Committee

RE: In Opposition of LD 1348: An Act to Increase the Limit on Damages Under the Maine Tort Claims Act for Negligence Involving School Field Trips.

DATE: April 7, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Dr. Holly Blair, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Principals' Association – Professional Division. The MPA represents more than 700 PreK-12 principals and assistant principals, CTE Directors and Assistant Directors, and Athletic Directors of public and private schools in Maine.

The MPA Legislative Committee is in opposition of LD 1348. This bill proposes to increase the limit on damages under the Maine Tort Claims Act for negligence involving school field trips from \$400,000 to \$5,000,000. While the intention to provide protections and recourse in the event of harm is understandable, this significant increase raises serious concerns.

Raising the limit to \$5,000,000 would have a substantial financial impact on school districts across Maine. Many districts are already struggling to meet the growing educational needs of their students. This bill would likely lead to higher insurance premiums and potential exposure to unsustainable financial risk, further straining already limited school budgets.

Additionally, the definition of "negligence" can be subjective and open to interpretation. Increasing the liability limit so dramatically could create uncertainty and fear among school staff, making it more difficult to offer field trips that provide valuable educational experiences for students.

We are concerned that the unintended consequence of this legislation may be fewer field trip opportunities, as districts may become unwilling to take on the heightened financial risk.

For these reasons, we respectfully oppose LD 1348 and urge the committee to consider the potential financial and educational impacts this bill would have on Maine's public schools.