

TESTIMONY NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST

L.D. 799

AN ACT TO REPORT GENDER WAGE GAPS

March 12, 2025

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder, and members of the Labor Committee, I am Eileen King, the deputy executive director of the Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association neither for against L.D. 799, An Act to Report Gender Wage Gaps.

Our associations believe the issue of the gender wage gap is an important one, and eliminating that gap is a worthwhile goal. Despite decades of incremental progress, women are still unfortunately paid less than their male counterparts.

School districts have worked to address this problem through collective bargaining agreements with our local unions. These agreements dictate standardized pay based on an employee's years of experience and education level, helping to ensure that schools are providing compensation in a fairer (though not perfect) way. We support the goals of this bill to identify and quantify gender wage gaps and help employers to address them.

However, our associations have concerns about the resources needed to gather the data required in L.D. 799. It is not an easy task to calculate the hourly equivalent rates of pay of each subsection of employees, as required in this bill, and will likely take hours of additional work from our business departments. And besides the actual calculation of this data, the provision in this bill requiring that, "*the employer shall allow an employee the opportunity to review the submission and make any correction to an error in the employee's data*" will likely lead to a need for more correspondence and confirmation of this data with employees, adding even more work.

We believe there are easier ways to calculate this data for schools that would still achieve the sponsor's goals. Maine schools must report all staffing data to the Maine Department of Education's NEO Data System. We believe it would be more useful and efficient for L.D. 799 to exempt school districts and simply request that state agencies calculate this data instead. This would achieve the goals of L.D. 799 while reducing costs on our schools, ensuring they can focus on supporting educators and students.