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TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO

L.D. 449

AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN THE ABILITY OF PUBLIC EMPLOYERS AND UNIONS TO NEGOTIATE

Senator Rafferty, Representative Sylvester and members of the Labor and Housing Committee, I am Steven Bailey, executive director of Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association in opposition to L.D. 449.

Our associations don't understand why this bill has been introduced when its intent is to overturn contract language already agreed upon by both sides. That appears to us as an extreme and over-reaching interference by Augusta into local negotiations and one that disrespects both sides in the bargaining process.

The current flexibility to ask for a delay to the 10-day rule is used by both sides, and current contracts, by definition, are agreed upon by both sides. If one side wants to take it out of the contract, they can negotiate that at the local level.

We believe this bill introduces a very dangerous concept, which is legislators will start to amend local contracts that are the purview of the local teachers association and the School Board. Those contracts, as you know, also outline salary and benefit agreements that ultimately affect what local property taxpayers will pay to support their local schools.

We urge a unanimous ought not to pass.