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TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO

L.D. 949

AN ACT TO PROTECT WORKERS FROM EMPLOYER SURVEILLANCE

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder 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. 949.

During the school day and after school hours, knowing who is on-premises is crucial for campus safety. The ability to detect unauthorized visitors is a major pro of security cameras. Security cameras make it easier for security staff and school administrators to keep track of students and teachers and better understand who should or should not be on school property. Security cameras in schools and on school grounds also deter crimes like thefts, break-in, vandalism, trespassing and even bullying.

Our associations oppose this bill as security cameras are used widely inside and outside of our school buildings. The language in this bill is a bit broad and lacks definitions. The bill states that the use of cameras must be “least invasive”, what does that mean for schools and their campuses? The bill limits the use of cameras to the smallest of employees. School cameras are installed to capture any individual who enters the campus or the school building, therefore limiting the use to the smallest of employees would be impossible. The bill calls to have the data collected accessed only by authorized agents. The data gathered by school cameras is accessed many times by school safety directors or school administrators. When appropriate, this data may be turned over to law enforcement. This bill does not determine who authorized agents are.

To reduce or re-define the use of cameras in our schools results in the reduction of the safety protocols that schools use to keep our students safe.