

Mary Laughlin
Limington
LD 1443

April 21, 2023

Re: LD 1443 An Act to Establish a Recall Process for Public School Board Members
To: Committee on State and Local Government

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Mary Laughlin and I live in Limington. I am writing in support of LD 1443.

As I understand this bill, it will prevent discretionary recall of school board members by identifying only certain types of misconduct suitable for a recall. It also prevents a recall by a small percentage of voters because as it is written, it requires at least 25% of the number of voters in the last gubernatorial election to vote in a recall election.

These measures are important to address the fact that school board recalls are increasing in Maine and seem to be based not so much on specific misconduct issues but on the capricious contentions of small groups of aggrieved voters. The result is major disruption to our school boards' main goals of governing schools and enacting and overseeing school policy.

I believe the bar must be high for a recall vote of school board members. Otherwise, capable candidates will not want to run for school board when they know that their successful election by a majority of voters can be undone so readily by a minority group of dissatisfied voters.

And it must be acknowledged that the current wave of school board member recalls is part of a brazen national political strategy to destabilize our public schools. The strategy involves recalling school board members along with bringing pressure for narrow content to take over in school libraries and curricula.

I do not want Maine's public schools to fall prey to this overt political scheme. Creating a single school board recall policy with strict limits as put forth in LD 1443 will help prevent political manipulation of our public school heritage.

Please vote "ought to pass" for LD 1443.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Mary Laughlin