

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

L.D. 433

AN ACT RELATING TO REQUIREMENTS FOR SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS

April 22, 2025

Senator Nangle, Representative Crafts, and esteemed members of the Transportation Committee, I am Steven Bailey, Executive Director of the Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and the Maine School Superintendents Association in support of L.D. 433, which if passed will help to address the challenges that our schools face in recruiting qualified school bus drivers. The need for safe and efficient transportation for our students is critical, and this bill offers a practical solution that will help meet those needs.

As the shortage of qualified school bus drivers continues to grow, L.D. 433 offers a sensible approach to easing some of the barriers in the current certification process. By allowing the possibility of federal waivers for certain components of the commercial driver's license (CDL) and vehicle inspection requirements, this bill will make it easier for qualified drivers to operate school buses without unnecessary duplication of efforts.

Specifically, the proposed waivers for the "under-the-hood" component of the pre-trip inspection and other federal requirements will ensure that experienced drivers can transition into school bus driving roles without needing to repeat training and testing for skills they already possess. State agencies are already recognizing and honoring these "under-the-hood" waivers, and L.D. 433 would simply enshrine that policy into statute.

Furthermore, this bill acknowledges the value of experience and ensures that drivers of vehicles comparable to school buses are not unfairly penalized by redundant certification processes. By clarifying that the examination for school bus drivers does not require testing on combination vehicles, L.D. 433 better aligns with the real-world skills necessary to safely operate school buses.

Ultimately, this bill will help recruit and retain qualified individuals who are essential to safely transporting our students. In the face of a growing need for drivers, these changes will streamline the certification process, maintain safety standards, and help schools meet their transportation needs.

Thank you for your consideration, and I urge you to support L.D. 433.