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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

L.D. 307

AN ACT TO LIMIT THE NUMBER OF CHARTER SCHOOLS IN MAINE

Senator Millett, Representative Kornfield and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Steven Bailey, executive director of Maine School Management Association and am here on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association in support of L.D. 307.

We support this bill because it supports the experimental nature of charter schools envisioned by the law. It would hold the schools and the commission accountable to the requirements in statute that charter schools may be established as public schools if they:

- Create high quality schools with high standards;
- Close achievement gaps;
- Increase high quality education opportunities; and,
- Provide alternative environments for students not thriving in traditional settings.

That is a high bar and it should be. Charter schools are 100 percent funded by the state and this year will draw down \$27 million in General Purpose Aid. Their academic performance is mixed, and there is considerable churn with the two virtual schools, which alone draw down roughly \$4 million each. I've attached a chart on funding to this testimony.

To be fair to the Charter Commission, its members have had public discussions about the need to be less of an advocacy group for charters and stronger overseers. This bill would give them the impetus to decide which schools are meeting the mission of the law, and which ones are not. When and if a decision is made to terminate a charter contract, there would be room under the cap for a new school.

General Purpose Aid for Local Schools

PRELIMINARY NOT YET ENACTED
as of 2/15/2019

FY 2019-20 General Purpose for Local Schools				Comparison to FY 2018-19								
<i>Amounts do not include principal & interest for unbonded debt or pending Sudden & Severe Adjustments</i>				<i>Amounts do not include Miscellaneous Adjustments - Section 5B</i>								
<i>Amounts do not include Miscellaneous Adjustments - Section 5B</i>				(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
					<i>Mill Expectation at</i>	8.28		8.48				
5% Min. Subsidy					<i>Min. Subsidy at</i>	5%		5%				
45% Min. Spec. Ed.					<i>Min. Spec. Ed. at</i>	45%		40%				
							FY 2019-20				FY 19	FY 19
						Adjusted		FY 2018-19		Amount	to	to
						State Share		Enacted		Change	FY 20	FY20
SAU has been reorganized or withdrawn from another SAU					Adjusted	Local	* Includes CTE Center	Adjusted	FY 2018-19	in Debt	% Change	% Change
					Required	Share	allocations 5B6	State Share	to	Service	to	Average
					EPS	Share			FY 2019-20	FY 2018-19	to	State
					Total	Local Share			Gain or	to	State	Pupils
					Allocation at	<i>(Includes Adjustments under 20-A MRSA 15689</i>			(Loss)	FY 2019-20	Average =	Average =
					100%	<i>sub-sections 1, 1-B and 2)</i>			(Loss)	FY 2019-20	1%	0%
					<i>(ED 279 Section 5A)</i>		<i>(ED 279 Section 5A)</i>		<i>(ED 279 Section 5A)</i>	<i>(Col. 4 minus Col 5)</i>		
Public Charter Schools												
1761			Acadia Academy	2,507,822.14			2,507,822.14	\$2,076,722.28	\$431,099.87	\$0.00		
1630			Baxter Academy for Technology	4,287,204.12			4,287,204.12	\$4,359,966.44	(\$72,762.31)	\$0.00		
1510			Cornville Regional Charter Schoo	3,753,234.61			3,753,234.61	\$2,838,257.08	\$914,977.53	\$0.00		
1631			Fiddlehead School of Arts and Sc	1,427,610.65			1,427,610.65	\$1,448,257.42	(\$20,646.77)	\$0.00		
1632			Harpwell Coastal Academy	2,290,218.38			2,290,218.38	\$2,359,089.71	(\$68,871.34)	\$0.00		
1501			Maine Academy of Natural Scien	2,218,276.00			2,218,276.00	\$2,699,928.21	(\$481,652.22)	\$0.00		
1672			Maine Connections Academy	4,097,915.33			4,097,915.33	\$4,069,044.71	\$28,870.62	\$0.00		
1739			Maine Virtual Academy	3,923,306.40			3,923,306.40	\$4,089,391.38	(\$166,084.97)	\$0.00		
1762			Snow Pond Arts	2,489,337.78			2,489,337.78	\$2,043,370.04	\$445,967.75	\$0.00		