

The Maine Heritage Policy Center Testimony to Support LD 185 “An Act To Provide a Method for a Student To Be Excused from Standardized Testing”

Senator Millett, Representative Kornfield and distinguished members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Adam Crepeau and I serve as a policy analyst at The Maine Heritage Policy Center. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of LD 185.

The Maine Heritage Policy Center supports this bill because it would give parents and guardians the legal right to excuse their children from standardized testing.¹ Also, it would require that school administrative units notify parents and guardians of their option to excuse their children from standardized testing. As of 2018, eight states had adopted similar legislation that would allow students to be exempted from testing.² Maine should be the next state to give parents the choice to do so.

According to the Maine Education Association, the average student takes 112 tests between Kindergarten and 12th grade.³ Students also spend an average of 20-25 hours on testing annually, which does not include preparation.⁴ Another study showed that 55 percent of teachers estimated their students spent more than a week on state-mandated testing.⁵ The time dedicated to taking standardized tests could be better spent on learning in a classroom environment. Teachers typically have six hours daily to prepare students for the next grade -- standardized testing utilizes too much of this time.

Because educators feel the pressure from their school and administrators to have their students perform well on standardized tests, they spend more time than necessary to prepare for them. Over 70 percent of teachers spend more than a week preparing their students for state-mandated tests.⁶ Further, another survey showed 72 percent of teachers felt moderate to extreme pressure to improve their students' test scores.⁷ Thus, some teachers are spending weeks ensuring their students perform well on tests instead of using that time to give them a better education.

¹ <http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP0148&item=1&snum=129>

² <http://www.fairtest.org/get-involved/opting-out>

³ <https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/getTestimonyDoc.asp?id=38894>

⁴ <https://www.wbur.org/hereandnow/2015/10/26/standardized-testing-time>

⁵ <https://www.cep-dc.org//displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=1456>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ <https://www.theclassroom.com/effects-standardized-tests-teachers-students-10379.html>

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Parents and educators know what is best for students in the classroom. In other words, the federal and state testing mandates that students are subjected to are a one-size fits all approach and are not suitable for everyone. Students with test anxiety may not perform well on standardized tests but excel in other areas in the classroom. Therefore, some students are at a disadvantage when subjected to these testing requirements, especially if they are indicators of success.

While LD 185 does not solve all of the problems associated with standardized testing, it does address one of the biggest issues - parental choice and over-testing. For those reasons, The Maine Heritage Policy Center urges the committee to vote, "Ought to Pass" on LD 185. Thank you.