

**The Maine Heritage Policy Center
Testimony to Oppose LD 1879
“An Act Regarding the Adoption of Education Policies
by School Boards”**

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 speak in opposition to LD 1879.

The Maine Heritage Policy Center is opposed to LD 1879 because it would make education policies that are not adopted by school boards, under the procedure established in LD 1879, subject to collective bargaining. While education policies that currently exist would be exempt from this process, it leaves the door open for major decisions to be made behind closed doors instead of in public where they belong. .

Put differently, this bill would allow education policies that labor organizations could not pass through the school boards to be negotiated behind closed doors by teachers unions and local school districts — a win-win for unions and a loss for the public at-large. Parents and taxpayers have a vested interest in helping to shape education policies at our local school board meetings. Labor unions merely have a vested interest in protecting the workers they represent, regardless of the costs or consequences.

The Maine Heritage Policy Center believes that if the state’s school boards decide to forego developing or adopting a new education policy, it should not be considered again unless it is reintroduced to that same body. Under LD 1879, an education policy up for debate at a local school board meeting could fail due to mounted opposition and union representatives would still be able to use that policy as a chip in collective bargaining negotiations. This would be unfair to the public at-large and the town’s taxpayers.

Union negotiations should remain limited to wages, hours, working conditions and/or contract grievance arbitration. Let us be clear in saying that labor unions are labor experts, not education policy experts. For those reasons, The Maine Heritage Policy Center urges the committee to vote, “Ought Not to Pass” on LD 1879. Thank you.