

Testimony of Teresa Merrill  
President, Maine Association of School Nurses  
In Opposition to L.D. 1491  
An Act to Allow Trained, Nonmedical Employees in Schools to Administer  
Emergency Medications  
Sponsored by Representative Justin Chenette  
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

January 11, 2016

Senator Langley, Representative Kornfield and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

My name is Teresa Merrill. I am the President of the Maine Association of School Nurses. I am here today to testify in opposition to L.D. 1491.

School nurses are Registered Professional Nurses licensed by the Maine State Board of Nursing and Certified by the Maine State Board of Education whose practice is governed by Maine Nurse Practice Act. By law, “the registered professional nurse is responsible for the nature and quality of nursing care that a patient receives. Assessment of the nursing needs of a patient, the plan of nursing actions, implementation of the plan, and evaluation are essential components of professional nursing practice and are the functions of the registered professional nurse.”

The delivery of care by school nurses is in keeping with the Maine Legislature’s mission of the “ preservation of the public peace, health and safety” of the people of Maine. Although other personnel may be employed to assist the registered professional nurse in the performance of nursing tasks, such personnel cannot safely be used as a substitute for the registered professional nurse.” L.D.1491 takes this essential role of the Registered Professional Nurse and transfers it to the school administrative unit (see 02-380 Chapter 5 and 6).

Maine Statute states “The school nurse shall supervise and coordinate the health services and health-related activities” Title 20-A, Chapter 223, Subchapter 3, 6403). Again, this bill removes the role of the school nurse to coordinate and supervise the unlicensed personnel. The Registered Professional nurse, in collaboration with the parents and the health care provider, assesses the student’s health condition, the stability of the condition, the training and capability of the unlicensed assistive personnel (UAP) and the safety of the setting for the care required.

LD 1491 does not define emergency medications, and places emphasis on the acquisition of volunteers and the SAU and not the safety of students. *The Maine Association of School Nurses believes the* existing laws guide the professional practice of school nursing in creating the safest environment for students attending Maine schools.

For these reasons, the Maine Association of School Nurses is in opposition to L.D. 1491.

Sincerely,

Teresa M. Merrill, R.N.  
President Maine Association of School Nurses