



STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
1 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

Paul R. LePage
GOVERNOR

1 August 2017

The 128th Legislature of the State of Maine
State House
Augusta, ME

Dear Honorable Members of the 128th Legislature:

Under the authority vested in me by Article IV, Part Third, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Maine, I am hereby vetoing LD 642, "Resolve, To Establish the Task Force to Identify Special Education Cost Drivers and Innovative Approaches to Services (Emergency)."


One way to guarantee an important issue is not going to be solved is to relegate it to a legislative study. I agree special education costs are increasing dramatically and that something must be done to provide greater access to services at a lower cost to Maine families and taxpayers. This is why the recently passed biennial budget introduced several reforms that are poised to help build regional capacity for high-cost, low-incidence services. I have also directed the Maine Department of Education to conduct a review of special education cost drivers and make recommendations for reforms. That work is ongoing. While we await recommendations from DOE, I do not believe this task force will be productive.

Further, we know a major driver of increased special education costs are state and federal maintenance-of-effort requirements, which means that local schools must continue to spend more money than they did last year—even if they discover more efficient ways to serve their students. These barriers to efficient and effective services defy common sense.

Worse yet, the composition of the proposed task force seems engineered to produce recommendations that will demand the state spend more on special education, not less, contradicting the name of the task force. Here the legislature has identified rising costs as a problem, and I predict this task force will recommend we spend more money. This task force will not solve our problems; it will simply waste time and money for all involved.

For these reasons, I return LD 642 unsigned and vetoed. I urge the legislature to sustain it.

Sincerely,


Paul R. LePage
Governor



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