



STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
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AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

Paul R. LePage
GOVERNOR

10 January 2014

The 126th Legislature of the State of Maine
State House
Augusta, ME

Dear Honorable Members of the 126th Legislature:

Under the authority vested in me by Article IV, Part Third, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Maine, I hereby veto LD 1353, "An Act To Further Reduce Student Hunger."

This bill presents an irresponsible unfunded mandate. It tells school administrative units who have 50 percent of their students qualify for free or reduced lunch to operate a summer lunch program or collaborate with another institution to provide a lunch program. It directs schools to impose a program without providing the funding. This is the very problem that we see arise time and time again between the State and local government and I do not support it.

I have a deep concern about our poor students and communities, but current law allows those communities to opt-in to a school lunch program. This bill goes further, requiring schools to provide such programs without paying for it. Additionally, although the bill contains an opt-out program, the school administration may only opt-out after such requirement has been imposed. To that end, the opt-out provision is merely a gimmick allowing the state to impose the requirement without also providing the requisite funding.

For these reasons, I return LD 1353 unsigned and vetoed. I strongly urge the Legislature to sustain it.

Sincerely,

Paul R. LePage
Governor



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