



BINDING ARBITRATION

LD 1177, An Act To Improve Public Sector Labor Relations, which deals with binding arbitration, would allow salaries, pensions and insurance to be determined by outside arbitrators once the School Board and the union hit an impasse in negotiations. Since these costs represent the majority of any school budget, school boards and their constituents will have no real voice. Taxpayers will have to pay the bill with no input at the local level.



The law has banned arbitration on salaries, pensions and insurance for public employees, including teachers, for more than 40 years based on the court's belief that decisions of such fiscal impact should be decided by those officials elected by the people.

Please vote against LD 1177, which received a divided report in the Labor Committee. It would harm public education in Maine and put a greater burden on local property taxpayers because:

- These costs have been excluded from arbitration under law to protect the voice local property taxpayers have through their locally elected school board members.
- Once arbitrators are given the power to determine personnel costs, they will have the power to force the school board and local voters to raise taxes to cover those costs.
- These costs represent the majority of any school budget, but under this proposal school board members and their constituents will have no real voice.
- This is taxation without representation.

NEGOTIATION OF EDUCATION POLICY

LD 240, Act to Allow Public Employers of Teachers to Negotiate Regarding Educational Policies, would take away the public's right to have a say in how their schools are run by allowing policy to be negotiated behind closed doors. Today policy is discussed and adopted in open school board meetings by board members who are elected by local parents, taxpayers and citizens. This bill would put the focus on the adults in the building instead of the students we are charged to serve.

The bill is currently tabled in the Labor Committee, but when last discussed and amended it would allow negotiation of the undefined and wide-open category of teacher workload; teacher caseload, which typically deals with serving students with special needs; involuntary transfers; and, teacher preparation time.

If education policy is made negotiable it could:

- Hurt our most vulnerable students;
- Take away local control from the school board, voters and taxpayers;
- Require costly decisions to be made behind closed doors;
- Silence the voice of parents, citizens and taxpayers; and,
- Put critical decisions about local schools in the hands of outside arbitrators.

Morning in the Senate





RIGHT TO STRIKE

L.D. 900, An Act To Expand the Rights of Public Employees under the Maine Labor Laws, is scheduled to be heard April 17 in the Labor Committee. It would give public employees, including teachers, municipal and county employees, state and legislative employees, university, academy and community college employees and judicial employees the right to strike. The only exception is for public safety employees.

If passed it would hard Maine's public education system and the students it serves because:

- Strikes will severely disrupt the education of children and the lives of their families.
- Even a short strike could upend an academic year, breaking educational continuity for students and throwing off school calendars for instruction and in-school and after-school activities.
- Unions representing school employees, including teachers, educational support staff, custodians and bus drivers, could call for a strike at any time, with no warning to the community.

