

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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State of Maine  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL  
AND CULTURAL SERVICES  
Augusta, Maine

November 21, 1977

To: Administrative Council  
From: H. Sawin Millett, Jr., Commissioner  
Re: Department Position on December 5 Referendum Questions

The attached statement encompasses the Department's position on the December 5 referendum questions as reviewed and approved at today's meeting of the Administrative Council.

Please make every effort to share this position with your staff members in order that all have a common understanding on this matter.

HSM:pdg

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL  
AND CULTURAL SERVICES

DEPARTMENT POSITION ON DECEMBER 5 REFERENDUM QUESTIONS

On December 5, 1977, the voters of Maine will have an opportunity to express themselves on three issues of direct interest to the Department. These questions include the possible repeal of the Uniform Property Tax (listed first on the ballot) and two bond issue questions--Referendum Question No. 4, which would authorize the sale of \$3,748,000 for constructing educational facilities at four Vocational Technical Institutes (VTI's), and Referendum Question No. 5, which would authorize the sale of \$10 million for the purpose of making energy conservation improvements in state-owned and public school buildings. The Department has spoken in support of the enactment of each of these three measures as they were presented to the Legislature. During the four years that have elapsed since the enactment of the Uniform Property Tax as part of an overall school funding reform package, we have worked to promote continuing improvements in both the revenue and distribution portions of the law.

We recognize that the purpose of a referendum election is to give to voters of the state an individual and collective opportunity to express themselves on matters of importance to the entire citizenry. We believe that we have a responsibility to assist the voters in the exercise of this important voting right by providing them with accurate, objective, and complete information on such issues as have a direct or indirect effect on the Department's statutory responsibilities.

Since we are restricted from advocating a particular position on referendum questions involving the expenditure of public monies, we must concentrate our efforts on encouraging the voters of Maine to exercise their voting privilege on December 5 by providing such information as will ensure maximum voter understanding of the issues.