

Testimony of Jeff McCabe  
Maine Service Employees Association, SEIU Local 1989

In Support of LD 258, "An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025" (Emergency)  
(Governor's Bill)

Sponsored by Representative Melanie Sachs

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs,  
and the Joint Standing Committee Education and Cultural Affairs  
Monday, February 13, 2023, State House Room 228, and Electronically

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, I'm Jeff McCabe, director of politics and legislation for the Maine Service Employees Association, Local 1989 of the Service Employees International Union. The Maine Service Employees Association represents over 13,000 workers across the state, including workers for the Maine Community College System and Maine Maritime Academy.

Members of our union are encouraged by many initiatives impacting them in the Governor's proposed State Budget and welcome engagement by the Legislature. We want to draw your attention to MSEA member testimony being submitted by members on the Maine Maritime Academy and Maine Community College System initiatives in the proposed budget.

**Maine Community College System**

We are extremely proud of the work of our members at the Community College System. We proudly represent the staff and adjuncts across the Community College System. The proposal in the budget associated the Community College System is supported by MSEA members, who have in recent years fought hard for more equity, safety and respect in the system statewide. Whenever the Community College system adapts to meet the needs of our great state, it is our members who step up to meet those changes. The Community College System is vital to workforce development and training. It meets the needs of recent high school grads, those displaced from layoffs, those seeking career changes and so much more. The MSEA Adjuncts provide the majority of that education. We're thankful for the efforts of the Community College System leadership during the pandemic and for recent invests made in the system.

**Maine Maritime Academy**

We're also here today in full support of those portions of the proposed budget relating to Maine Maritime Academy. The staff and faculty on the campus at MMA are an integral part of training the next generation of Maine mariners. MMA also is a STEM college offering degrees in engineering, oceanography and logistics, among others. As Maine's special-purpose college and one of only six state maritime academies in the nation, it is critical we all share in ensuring MMA's success.

However, chronic underfunding of Maine Maritime Academy has left it in a situation where it must make up an undue share of its base operating budget that similar institutions count on their states to pick up. Currently, Maine Maritime Academy receives roughly 23% of its operational budget from state

funding, which compares to an average of 40%+ enjoyed by its peer institutions here in Maine within +/- 50% enrollment. This funding disparity means Maine Maritime Academy must make up the gap through a myriad of ways that inevitably result in raising tuition, limiting programming, and, most concerning to us, minimizing labor costs.

Recently, we have partnered with Maine Maritime Academy to advocate for closing this funding gap. Equitably funding MMA means ensuring success on campus for students and faculty alike, and doing so will put Maine Maritime Academy in a strong position going forward. That is why we are so pleased to see \$2 million added to MMA's base operations budget in each year of the biennium, as well as the 4.5% baseline increase made available to all institutions of higher education. These meaningful investments in the Academy are a significant step toward closing the funding disparity and we would like to thank the Administration for recognizing the importance of beginning to narrow that gap.

However, there is still more to be done and we look forward to partnering with Maine Maritime Academy, members of these committees and the Legislature as a whole to ensure students and faculty alike can count on MMA being fully funded.

We ask the Legislature to support all higher education in the propose budget and look to make additional investments.

Thank you and I would be glad to answer any questions and to put you in touch with our members to answer questions and to help you understand the important work they do.