

Paul Kim
Orono
LD 1458

Dear Committee Members,

My family and I are asking you to please vote for LD 1458 to increase funding for MSSM. My son attended MSSM for his freshman and sophomore years from Fall 2000 to Spring 2002, which was during the height of the pandemic. The MSSM administration and staff performed admirably during those trying times. We quickly learned that one reason why MSSM was able to act with such resourcefulness was because MSSM is used to making do with what little they have.

In my opinion, MSSM has been severely underfunded for many years, which makes its success so much more remarkable. Its facilities are in dire need of renovation, and its faculty and staff have been dwindling at an alarming rate. During our son's time there, we watched in despair as more and more long-term and beloved MSSM employees left. It was clear that MSSM was having difficulty finding competent replacements because of the unfortunate combination of MSSM's remote location and salary limitations. Although our son greatly enjoyed his time at MSSM, especially in regard to the academic rigor, his decision to return home for his junior year was largely based on the residential facilities and personnel (and lack thereof). He has several friends who made the same decision for similar reasons.

MSSM cannot survive for long with such a steady loss of students, faculty, and staff, all while its facilities continue to degrade further. Although we would not directly benefit from LD 1458, we think it is important for Maine to support MSSM as much as possible because it is still a wonderful school with great potential. MSSM and its graduates can serve as an engine for economic growth in Maine, especially in terms of STEM. While the rest of our jobs will be replaced by AI, it will be MSSM grads who are making the AI. So please be nice to them while you still can.