

Sarah O'Malley
Sedgwick
LD 2092

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To the members of the Education and Cultural Affairs committee, I am writing in support of LD 2092 "An Act to Equalize Funding for the Maine Maritime Academy".

I have worked at Maine Maritime Academy since 2004, serving first as adjunct faculty, then teaching staff, and now as an assistant professor of marine biology. In addition to my other duties, I serve on the Faculty Union collective bargaining team. Serving on the bargaining team has given me insight into the extreme difficulties faced in recruiting new faculty for open positions. I have heard story after story of top candidates being offered a position only to turn it down due to the low salary offered. Equalization of funding could enable our institution to recruit new faculty with competitive compensation. This would result in currently understaffed departments being fully staffed, reducing teaching overloads and increase the quality of instruction for our students.

In addition to recruiting top quality candidates, equalizing funding for Maine Maritime would allow a cost-of-living increase for existing faculty and staff that begins to account for national inflation. This increase would subsequently increase retention of faculty and staff (along with improved working conditions that would result from being fully staffed). Increasing the buying power of faculty and staff paychecks to meet the increased costs associated with utilities, food and housing will significantly help retain high quality faculty and staff. I have a faculty colleague who cannot afford to fill their fuel oil tank, the stress of which most certainly diverts much of their energy away from their teaching.

We faculty are anxious to do the best possible job educating our students. Equalizing the funding for MMA with other state institutions will enable us to be fully staffed and compensated at a level that enables us to keep up with cost-of-living increases; both of which will free up bandwidth to let us do our jobs to our full potential. For the benefit of the Academy, the students, the community, and the State of Maine, please pass and fund LD 2092.