

Good Afternoon Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Committee on Educational and Cultural Affairs. My name is Jake Adams and I am testifying in favor of LD 2092, An Act to Equalize Funding for the Maine Maritime Academy. I live in Holden and work at Maine Maritime Academy in the IT department as a Systems Integration Specialist, primarily supporting Admissions and Financial Aid; I also serve on the Board of Directors with MSEA-SEIU, and as a Steward in my local chapter.

I testified in the spring and spoke about how our funding compares with similar institutions such as SUNY, Texas A&M, Cal Maritime, etc and how they receive over 40% of their operating budget from their state. While at the same time we receive roughly 23% of our operating budget from the state. Similarly, institutions within the state that have a comparable number of FTEs receive around 44% of their operating budget from the state. While this leaves us at a bit of a loss, we do quite well, according to a study from the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce out of 4500 colleges studied we are number 6 in terms of return on investment and we are number 1 for low income students. All of this remains true. I thank you for your decision to help us in the previous legislative session with additional funding but of course that was a fairly small step, LD 2092 if passed would go a long way toward bringing us to parity in regard to funding.

I will not rehash my previous testimony here in full but I will attempt to add to it. While it is true that our tuition is higher than other comparable institutions and that is largely a consequence of the lack of parity in funding; I want to mention another unfortunate consequence, and that is our wages. Our wages are low, there are employees that work for the Academy and qualify for benefits like SNAP, as a System Integration Specialist I make \$30,000 less per year than the average System Integration Specialist in Maine (according to available data). Provided with adequate funding it should become possible to pay a competitive wage thereby allowing the Academy to continue to attract and retain exemplary faculty and staff. Certainly additional funding would remove at least one barrier in the way of all of our employees earning a living wage.

I thank you for your time and your consideration. I implore you to vote in favor of LD 2092 and equalize funding for Maine Maritime Academy.

Jake Adams
Holden
LD 2092

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