

Testimony of Beth White
Maine Service Employees Association, SEIU Local 1989

In Support of LD 2092, An Act to Equalize Funding for the Maine Maritime Academy
Sponsored by Senator Nicole Grohoski

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,
Jan. 31, 2024, 1 PM, Cross Office Building Room 208, and Electronically

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, I'm Beth White, 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 Maritime Academy (MMA).

We're here today in support of LD 2092 to help ensure that MMA is adequately funded and staffed. This legislation provides ongoing funds to increase the State's share of operational funding so that it becomes commensurate with other public colleges and universities in the State that have enrollment within approximately 50% of MMA's enrollment.

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.

While our Great State of Maine has made good progress in making postsecondary educations affordable for students enrolled in the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System, the reality is that chronic underfunding of MMA for years 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. As of 2023, MMA received roughly 23% of its operational budget from State funding, which compares to an average of 40%-plus in State funding enjoyed by its peer institutions in Maine within around 50% of its enrollment. This funding disparity means that MMA must make up the gap through a myriad of ways that inevitably result in raising tuition, limiting programming and minimizing labor costs to the detriment of both enrolled students and those employed by MMA.

Right now, there's a serious public employee recruitment and retention problem at MMA and it is affecting the students who are there to get a quality education as well as the MMA staff, faculty and cruises alike, according to the workers we represent at MMA. As of Jan. 24, 2024, MMA is advertising <https://mainemaritime.edu/employment-at-mma/staff-positions/> for: 12 full-time staff positions; four part-time staff positions; 13 temporary staff positions; multiple adjunct faculty vacancies in its College of Engineering, Management Science and Transportation; multiple adjunct faculty vacancies in its Department of Arts and Sciences; as well as eight vacant Cruise positions for 2024. It should be noted that all of these staff positions are central to the academy's operations and to the education of the enrolled students. Among the "temporary" staff positions available, for example, are four that are directly related to firefighting. It's important to note that the lack of firefighting instructors/trainers directly impacts mariners' abilities to get licensed and/or graduate from their program. All of MMA's vacancies as of Jan. 24, 2024, as listed on their website, are listed at the end of my testimony.

Recently, we have partnered with Maine Maritime Academy to advocate for closing the State funding disparity. To be sure, members of MSEA-SEIU Local 1989 who work in the Staff, Support and Professional Unit, the Supervisory Unit, and the Faculty Unit at MMA also are in contract negotiations with management at MMA for new two-year contracts.

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. We were encouraged last year to see \$2 million added to MMA's base operations budget in each year of this biennium, as well as the 4.5% baseline increase made available to all institutions of higher education. Those meaningful investments in the MMA are one step toward closing the funding disparity. We appreciate the Mills administration and the 131st Legislature for recognizing the importance of beginning to narrow that funding gap.

However, there remains much more to be done. Passing and enacting LD 2092 would be another step in the right direction, so we respectfully ask you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 2092. We look forward to partnering with Maine Maritime Academy, members of this committee and the Legislature as a whole to ensure that MMA students and workers can count on MMA being fully funded from now on. Thank you and I would be glad to answer any questions.

Job postings at Maine Maritime Academy, as of Jan. 24, 2024:

<https://mainemaritime.edu/employment-at-mma/staff-positions/>

STAFF POSITIONS FULL-TIME

- First Assistant Engineer - Training Vessel, \$88,795.20/year
- Accounts Payable Clerk, \$20.90/hour
- Building and Grounds Maintenance Worker (Custodian), \$16.28/hour
- Campus Safety Officer, \$20.24/hour
- Development Stewardship Specialist, \$20.90/hour
- Director of Alumni Relations, \$75,000/year
- Health Care Administrator - Head Athletic Trainer, \$62,899.20/year
- Marine Technician (Sailing) Crew Leader - 9 months, \$39,733.20/year
- Network Security Engineer, \$67,995.20/year
- Small Craft Master, \$57,699.20/year
- Varsity Sailing Coach - 9 months, \$36,535.20/year
- Third Assistant Engineer - aboard the Training Ship State of Maine, \$81,203.20/year

STAFF POSITIONS PART-TIME

- Database Administrative Assistant (20-24 hours/week), \$22.47/hour
- Campus Safety Officer, \$18.00/hour
- Deck Maintenance Assistant, \$25.00/hour
- Engine Maintenance Assistant, \$25.00/hour

STAFF POSITIONS TEMPORARY

- Assistant Football Coach (Hourly), \$13.80/hour

- Assistant Football Coach (Stipend), \$13.80/hour
- Assistant Men's Lacrosse Coach, \$13.80/hour
- Assistant Women's Lacrosse Coach, \$13.80/hour
- EMS Rehab Officer 2023-2024, \$30.00/hour
- Fire Fighting Assistant - On-Call, \$18.00/hour
- Fire Fighting Instructor 2023-2024, \$30.00/hour
- Fire Fighting Lecturer Instructor 2023-2024, \$30.00/hour
- Fire Fighting Safety Officer 2023-2024, \$30.00/hour
- Life Guard, \$15.00/hour
- Second Mate Schooner Bowdoin 2024, Accepting Applications
- Steward Schooner Bowdoin 2024, Accepting Applications
- Third Mate Schooner Bowdoin 2024, Accepting Applications

In addition, MMA also is advertising <https://mainemaritime.edu/employment-at-mma/faculty-positions/> for 'multiple' faculty vacancies in its College of Engineering, Management, Science and Transportation. MMA is looking for adjuncts to teach eight courses in the spring 2024 semester:

- ET206: "Mechanics I -Statics" — This course is part of the BIW Apprenticeship Program.
- ET230: "Strength of Materials" — This course is part of the BIW Apprenticeship Program.
- EG243: "Welding"
- ET202 : Statics and Dynamics
- ET211 : Thermodynamics I
- ET351 : Thermal/Fluids Lab
- ET362L: Nature and Properties of Materials Lab
- ET482L : Heating, Ventilation, & Air Conditioning Lab

MMA also is advertising <https://mainemaritime.edu/employment-at-mma/wp-content/uploads/sites/27/2024/01/AS-Adjunct-instructor-ads-Spring-24-updated-w-BIW.pdf> for the following Department of Arts and Sciences Adjunct Faculty Positions:

- Basic Drawing (HC333)
- Chemistry Laboratory (CH101, CH152)
- Chemistry Laboratory Preparation
- Composition (HC111)
- Digital Photography (HC339)
- Spanish (HC160, HC161)
- Humanities (HC220, HC230)
- Management Communications (HC232)
- Elective (HC331)
- Peer Tutoring Workshop (HC337)
- Teaching Assistant for Medical Person In Charge (MD311)
- Mathematics (MS101, MS103, MS110)
- Physical Education (PE102, PE108)
- Lifeguard Training (PE113)
- Physics Laboratory (PS102 Lab)
- Introduction to Psychology (PY200)

- Business Communications Instructor

Furthermore, MMA is advertising <https://mainemaritime.edu/employment-at-mma/cruise-positions/> to fill eight vacant Cruise positions for 2024:

- Able Seafarer - Training Ship State of Maine - Summer 2024
- Assistant Training Officer: Deck - Training Ship State of Maine - Summer 2024
- Assistant Training Officer: Engine - Training Ship State of Maine - Summer 2024
- Watch Officer: Deck - Training Ship State of Maine - Summer 2024
- Watch Officer: Engine - Training Ship State of Maine - Summer 2024
- Second Mate Schooner Bowdoin 2024
- Steward Schooner Bowdoin 2024
- Third Mate Schooner Bowdoin 2024