

March 5, 2024

Testimony in Opposition to LD 2231

Resolve, to Promote Access to Education and Workforce Development by Transferring Ownership of the Hutchinson Center Property in Belfast to the City of Belfast

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Nathan Gould. I am from Winterport. I am writing this testimony in opposition to LD 2231, “Resolve, to Promote Access to Education and Workforce Development by Transferring Ownership of the Hutchinson Center Property in Belfast to the City of Belfast.”

I am strongly against the seizure of lands by the government. If the University of Maine can have its property encroached upon, a poor precedent is set that jeopardizes the average citizen’s right to property. Regular people are often without the funds to support teams of lawyers for defense. Whether it’s taking a rural resident’s land for a powerline, a corporation’s assets for a public utility, or a university’s property for the use of a city, forcibly conveying ownership of land is unfair. Government is delegated only those rights the people possess themselves, and the people do not possess the right to steal. Thus, good governments should not take the property of others, even with the best intentions.

If we are to protect the rights of the small, that means we must uphold the rights of larger groups as well. Let the University handle its property. A better solution can be reached, perhaps one that even includes access to education for the community, but it should not be through this heavy-handed resolve. Trust the People of Maine to reach a solution without the interference of the government—things can work out quite well when the government backs off.

I ask the Committee to vote Ought Not to Pass. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Nathan C Gould

Winterport