

Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation. My name is Dr. Aimee Vlachos. I am an assistant teaching professor at the University of New England in Biddeford. I am a resident of Kennebunkport, Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of LD 2258.

The Portland Sea Dogs are an integral part of the Sports Management program at the University of New England. The ability for students to have hands-on experience is important at any level of education. At UNE we are thrilled that we can partner with a successful, top tier minor league baseball team. That experience has been a cornerstone of our program for years.

Through our relationship with the Sea Dogs our students are able to be mentored by some of the best in the business. The front office staff regularly participates in our career readiness panels for students who wish to work in professional sports. They mentor students throughout their time in our program and are invaluable resources when teaching the intricacies of minor league baseball such as collective bargaining, structure, and the overall business of baseball.

Our students not only benefit from the Sea Dogs in the classroom, but their involvement has extended to Hadlock Field as well. Students have developed promotional campaigns for the club and gain valuable workplace experience as interns. For reference, the Sea Dogs internship program is highly sought after for those looking to pursue a career in sports. UNE's access to this internship is invaluable.

The Sea Dogs know how to build community through sports and that shows every year when they recognize our graduates at a home game. Students always get a thrill when they take the field at Hadlock and take a bow as they enter the workforce.

It's difficult to imagine our State without the Sea Dogs. They have become as iconic of a brand as I can think of. When one thinks of companies that represent Maine, the Portland Sea Dogs certainly comes to the top of that list. While I'm sure you will hear testimony from the club and others that will outline the economic argument for

passing this bill I can tell you the educational contribution of the team to our University is well worth the investment. We can't imagine our program without their presence and contribution.

I would urge the committee to vote ought to pass on this bill.