

Testimony of Kathryn Novak
In Support of
LD 787, *An Act to Clarify Residency Requirements for and Provide Funding to the Maine School of Science and Mathematics*

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Kathryn Novak, and I am an undergraduate mechanical engineering student at the University of Maine and class of 2022 alumna of the Maine School of Science and Mathematics (MSSM). I am writing to testify in support of LD 787, *An Act to Clarify Residency Requirements for and Provide Funding to the Maine School of Science and Mathematics*.

I was born and raised in Aroostook County and applied to MSSM my freshman year of high school seeking the rigorous curriculum the institution offered. I was accepted and attended MSSM for the latter three years of my high school career, taking and participating in various courses and extracurriculars that were not offered at my sending school. Now as I approach my fourth year of college, I wholly recognize the advantages MSSM provided me academically and personally. The STEM-focused curriculum was foundational to my interests in engineering and supplied me with the resources and motivation to succeed in university and industry. MSSM instilled in me a sort of fortitude; it taught me the value in making mistakes, and how to learn from and persist through failure.

Most notably, MSSM gave me a sense of community within the state. During my time there, I formed lasting friendships with students, residential staff, and faculty, as well as strong connections within the alumni network. MSSM revealed to me a welcoming and vibrant community that extends far beyond its Limestone campus, and I continually meet individuals with fond knowledge of the school. It was this extensive support system that enabled me to get a research assistant position at the Advanced Structures and Composites Center my freshman year of college. Prior to attending MSSM, I had plans to pursue opportunities strictly out-of-state; I now have every intent and hope to remain at the University of Maine to continue my education upon graduation.

Any financial and legislative action to benefit the MSSM community has my complete support. I urge the committee to vote “ought to pass” for LD 787 as amended and thank you for your time and dedication to educational resources within the state.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Novak
Undergraduate Student
Orono, ME