

In SUPPORT of LD 1014 - An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Develop Maine Talent and Innovation by Improving the Infrastructure of the University of Maine System

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine and esteemed members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee,

My name is Lydia Savage and I am Portland resident and a professor at the University of Southern Maine. Additionally, I am President of the Associated Faculties of the Universities of Maine (AFUM) representing all fulltime faculty across the state. I offer this testimony today on behalf of the AFUM members I represent in support of LD 1014 - An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Develop Maine Talent and Innovation by Improving the Infrastructure of the University of Maine System.

The physical plant of the University of Maine System has suffered from years of declining state appropriations and deferred maintenance. AFUM and the MEA recognized that the System has made strides to address our needs for better facilities by selling underutilized space and investing where it is able the State needs to support us and in turn, allow us to support the state's economy and provide a quality education for our students; many of whom report that their Maine high school had more modern laboratories. On a personal note, I can report that in the past two years, the third floor of the five-story building where my department houses artifacts and laboratories has suffered water damage serious enough to lose entire libraries of books and materials three separate times.

The faculty and staff of the System continue to provide a high-quality experience for our students despite the odds (demographics shifts and underinvestment) and Maine should invest in that success and its future. Our facilities are essential to our success in educating the future of Maine and currently, they don't match the caliber of our faculty and staff. External research grants often depend on the physical plant we are able to document as meeting the needs of the research. I am linking to an article from the [National Education Association](#) that highlights the important work of UMS faculty that may be of interest.

As a taxpayer and Maine resident as well as university faculty for almost 30 years, I believe the investment in improving facilities would pay off for the state of Maine by enhancing the human and social capital of the state in every area - theater, science, technology, art, engineering, education, etc. The economy of Maine would benefit by employers viewing Maine as a state investing in higher education and choosing to remain here or locate or expand here. Thank you for your time.

Lydia Savage
Portland, Maine