

Mary LoMonaco  
Lincoln  
LD 1219

Chairperson and Members of the Maine State Legislative Committee,

I am writing to express my support for LD1219. As a proud graduate of the University of Maine system (USM), I can testify to the effectiveness and impact of the education I have received. My recent career has focused on helping companies develop and manage talent to adapt to the evolving technical and economic landscape.

The reality is that companies will not invest in new locations, such as Maine, without access to a well-qualified talent pool and supportive educational partners to develop the skills they need. Maine desperately needs its young people, yet many move away due to a lack of opportunities. Maine has the lowest median income in New England, and only 15% of households make more than \$100k - at a time when cost of living has exploded.

Investing in higher education is critical to reversing this trend, fostering a robust economy, and ensuring that Maine remains competitive and attractive for both businesses and residents. Research consistently shows that higher education plays a crucial role in driving economic growth and development. Universities and colleges are not only centers of learning and innovation but also significant contributors to the state and local economy. They provide high-quality education, foster a skilled workforce, and promote job creation, thereby enhancing competitiveness and prosperity in our communities.

Supporting higher education is an investment in our state's future. By nurturing talent and encouraging research and innovation, we cultivate a dynamic economy positioned to adapt and thrive in an ever-changing world. The outcome is a more prosperous and resilient Maine, with higher education serving as a cornerstone of this success.

I urge you to support LD1219 to enable a bright and prosperous future for our state.

Thank you for considering my testimony.