

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and other members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee:

My name is Pamela Proulx-Curry, and I live in Old Town. I am submitting written testimony today in support of LD 1533 - An Act to Ensure the Retention of R1 Research Institution Status by the University of Maine.

I am an Analytical Chemist. I worked as both a teaching assistant and a research assistant while enrolled in my doctoral program. Indeed, it was because of those assistantships that I was able to afford to attend graduate school at all. I've also worked as a Chemistry faculty member and as a higher ed administrator.

Research institutions are essential to economic growth and development of communities, cities, and states.

A recent study by Jenny L. Apriensnig et.al. at College of Business at Michigan Technical University on the regional economic impact of university research expenditures showed that every tax dollar expended generated value added, employment, and tax multipliers of 1.67, 1.86, and 1.74 for the micropolitan area and 2.02, 2.25, and 2.09 in the medium metropolitan area.

A study by Ross Devol, a Fellow at the Walton Family Foundation, on how research universities contribute to local economies concludes:

*"The American research university may be one of the greatest inventions this nation has ever produced. It is clear that other nations and localities recognize the economic potential of the American version of a research university since they are trying to copy it. Places throughout China, the rest of Asia, Europe, Russia, South America and Canada are attempting to replicate it.*

*The American research university is this nation's best defense against economic competition from the rest of world. If universities are not funded appropriately, we risk ceding the innovation advantage that America maintains. The regions where universities reside have a remarkable comparative advantage."*

Graduate students are the backbone of the research enterprise at R1 Universities. Research faculty direct the research, but the graduate students are the boots on the ground who get the work done. Without graduate students, research slows to a crawl. I had a conversation a week ago with the spouse of a researcher at the University of Maine whose funding has been rescinded through recent executive orders. She is now unable to hire graduate students for the summer and her research program is in limbo. She is a talented and productive young scientist in a high demand field who would be very welcome in many Canadian and European universities. How long she will remain at UMaine under current circumstances remains to be seen.

Investment in the teaching and research assistantships at the University of Maine is an investment in Maine's economic health and future well-being. I urge you to vote in favor of LD 1533. Thank you