

Julianne Siegfriedt
University of Southern Maine
LD 1014

My name is Julianne Siegfriedt and I work at the University of Southern Maine as an Assistant Professor and I live in Portland. I am submitting testimony today to testify in support of LD 1219, An Act to Increase State Funding for the Campuses of the University of Maine System and to Raise the Minimum Hourly Wage for Employees of the System.

I have worked at USM since 2017 and have yet to see substantial updates to existing infrastructure on campus. Some of the issues that persist because of lack of funding to improve our school and the UMaine System's availability of resources.

Faculty and staff have left the university because they can no longer afford to live near Portland and teach with the wages we provide. We have lost talented scholars who would have joined our faculty if they were able to make above a living wage - we are far behind what peer institutions provide faculty across the country in my own field of Sociology and others.

Beyond the investment in people, frequent elevator maintenance issues, mold, wasp infestations, water leaking, bathrooms in desperate need of updating are also factors that shape the experiences of students and staff and faculty across the university and shape decisions on whether or not to work or attend USM.

Please vote in favor of this bill. If we want to encourage new generations to invest in Maine and build a life here, a positive experience at UMaine schools is a very basic first step to making that happen. Many of my students who come to USM find themselves staying in the Portland area as long as they can afford it and I know that number would increase exponentially if the experience they had here was actually sufficiently resourced.

Thank you for your time.

Dr. Julianne Siegfriedt