

Rachel Bouvier
Portland
LD 1219

My name is Rachel Bouvier, and I am an economist at the University of Southern Maine. I write in strong support of Senator Mike Tipping's proposed bill, LD 1219.

In today's economic climate, robust public funding for higher education is more important than ever. As private colleges and universities become increasingly out of reach for many Maine families, our public university system plays a critical role in providing affordable, high-quality education. Yet, at the very moment when demand is growing, inflation and a declining state appropriation have strained our institutions' ability to meet the needs of Maine's students and communities.

The University of Maine System's impact extends far beyond its campuses. We are a driver of research, innovation, and workforce development. Our students—whether they are adult learners, Veterans, new Mainers, or recent high school graduates—go on to serve Maine as engineers, educators, artists, health professionals, and more. An investment in the UMS is an investment in the future of our state.

Now is not the time to scale back our commitment to higher education. It is the time to recommit. I urge you to support LD 1219 and ensure that Maine's public universities remain strong, accessible, and equipped to serve all Maine people.