

WL Chapkis
Portland
LD 1219

I was hired at the University of Southern Maine in 1995. I have watched the University struggle with inadequate funding for decades. In 2014, the situation was so dire that the university retrenched multiple faculty members and critical staff. The decision by the legislature to make community college free, while excellent on its own, has further decimated the UMaine System by depriving campuses of many first and second year students. The future of higher education in Maine hangs in the balance.

State appropriations to UMS must increase in order to protect the health of our public universities. As I understand it, the legislature's initial budget for the next two years includes no increase at all in appropriations which - given inflation - means decreased funding. Our students and all of those employed at the various UMS campuses deserve better.

Please support the bill introduced by Sen. Michael Tipping of Penobscot, 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.

This is a perilous time for higher education in the United States. With federal cuts threatened, the State must rise to the occasion and protect and fund its universities.

Sincerely,