

Rachel Hovel
AFUM
LD 1533

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

My name is Rachel Hovel, and I am an associate professor of biology at the University of Maine at Farmington. I also hold a graduate faculty appointment at the University of Maine at Orono. Thank you for considering my comments as you make decisions on the suite of bills before you.

I strongly support LD 1533, An Act to Ensure the Retention of R1 Research Institution Status by the University of Maine. The role of graduate workers throughout the University of Maine System is central to the System's work and its value to the state. This includes both research outputs, which have global impacts as well as meaningful benefits to our region, and the instructional role that graduate workers play in teaching classes and mentoring undergraduate students. To put it plainly: without graduate workers, these key outcomes, and majors returns on the investments of state funds into UMS, would not be possible. It is essential to support strong graduate worker positions within our System, creating opportunities for students to stay in Maine and allowing them to perform these essential roles while making ends meet.

Thank you for considering the essential role of the University of Maine system to our state as you make these decisions.