



STATE OF MAINE
Department of Public Safety
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April 29, 2025

LD 1759, An Act to Allow Firefighters to Be Eligible for State College Funding

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Shawn Esler, and it is a privilege to serve as the State Fire Marshal.

I write in **opposition** of LD 1759.

While the Department of Public Safety supports fire service training, LD 1759 does not provide ongoing funding necessary to conduct sustainable firefighting programming.

The Maine Fire Service Institute (MFSI) is authorized in statute (Title 20-A, Chapter 319, §9001) and is administered by the Southern Maine Community College. MFSI is considered Maine's authority on fire service training and supports fire departments across the State. MFSI delivers training, certification exams, guidance, train-the-trainers, and lends out advanced fire training props. Recently, MFSI and the FMO partnered to deliver fire investigation training in Bangor and Portland. We fully intend to strengthen that partnership in the coming years.

It is my understanding that these funds are already allocated to current students. These students are likely to include those enrolled in an emergency medical technician program, which is a prerequisite in most fire departments for those students looking to apply for a career in firefighting. Additionally, most fire science associate's degree programming occurs in the Community College System. Reducing those funds may have unintended consequences. **In essence, these funds are already being utilized to support Maine's firefighters.**

While this bill is well intended, I would ask you to consider a bill that creates dedicated positions at MFSI and one that includes ongoing financial support. Maine is facing emerging risks in the fire service. More training is required to prepare the next generation of emergency responders.

I ask you vote "Ought Not to Pass" on LD 1759 and consider a different funding source.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shawn Esler".

Shawn Esler, State Fire Marshal