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Farmington
LD 1219

I am a professor from the University of Maine at Farmington, and I am submitting this testimony to speak about LD 1219.

I am a first generation college student who now teaches at a university for which a majority of our student body is first generation as well. I have worked at UMF for 14 years, and I have seen the difference our university has made in our students' lives time and again. It is common for students who have graduated five or ten years ago to keep in contact with their professors because we made them feel welcome and showed them we will always look out for them. Students I met as far back as the first semester I began working at UMF keep in touch with me. They not only tell me about their lives and what has happened since they graduated from UMF, but they thank me for helping them get to where they are now. I thank them for being awesome.

We need increased state funding to support our students while they are at UMF and to prepare them for their post-graduate lives. We need to show these students that they have a place in higher education and in the workforce. We need to provide them with the best education so that they can then get the best job possible. Many of these students will stay in our state. An investment in UMF is an investment in Maine.

UMF desperately needs your help. Without increased funding we will have to drop programs and retrench faculty. UMF has already lost so much in the last five years. In the Humanities alone, we lost French, Spanish, Philosophy and Religion, and Women and Gender Studies--all to save money for the school. Our students lost out on these subjects and these minors; my beloved colleagues in those programs lost their jobs. Many of them had to change careers and uproot their families as a consequence.

I implore you to look at the good that can be accomplished by investing in UMF and its people--its students, faculty, and staff. We are small but mighty. We work hard, and we give back. We make our communities better places. We make the world a better place. All because we care.