

April 29, 2025

Senator Joseph Rafferty  
Representative Kelly Murphy  
Joint Standing Committee on Education  
and Cultural Affairs

**RE: Maine Independent Colleges Association Testimony in Support of LD 1558,  
Resolve, Establishing the Commission to Update Maine's Public Policy on  
Higher Education**

Dear Senator Rafferty and Representative Murphy:

I represent the Maine Independent Colleges Association (MICA) and testify today in support of LD 1558.

MICA represents 11 independent, nonprofit colleges and universities<sup>1</sup> throughout Maine that serve over 32,630 students, over 7,000 of whom are from Maine. These institutions are located in municipalities of all sizes across the State, from Maine's largest city to small tourist towns and farming communities. While they share the attributes of being independent and nonprofit, these institutions are highly diverse and serve very different aspects of the needs of Maine people. Collectively, the 11 institutions are an economic engine and an integral part of Maine's Higher Educational eco-system, as well as an important part of the Maine economy. Together they:

- Directly employ over 7,180 Maine workers.
- Support 14,300 jobs for Maine workers (both direct and indirect) with earnings in excess of \$632 million.
- Operating expenditures of over \$979 million.
- Capital expenditures of over \$200 million
- Have an estimated economic impact on Maine's economy of over \$2 billion each year.
- Generated \$51,839,000 in total taxes for state and local governments.
- Contribute over \$24 million in local community service.
- Provide over \$72 million in financial aid to Maine students.
- Provide access to facilities in all of their communities
- Draw nearly 300,000 visitors to our state each year

---

<sup>1</sup> Bates College, Bowdoin College, Colby College, College of the Atlantic, Husson University, Maine College of Art, Roux Institute at Northeastern University, St. Joseph's College of Maine, Thomas College, Unity College, and University of New England.

April 29, 2025

Page 2

LD 1285 establishes the Commission to Update Maine's Public Policy on Higher Education to review all related laws and rules addressing the State's public policy on higher education and make recommendations for potential legislative changes. The Commission shall, among its duties, analyze how best to continue to expand access to affordable high-quality higher education to help students achieve postsecondary success and prepare for the future. As MICA schools use many tools and methods to keep the cost of higher education affordable, while providing an excellent education in diverse settings, they should be a key part of this process.

MICA appreciates Rep. Sargent's focus and willingness to review Maine's higher education law and policy. MICA also appreciates the inclusion of representatives of MICA higher education institutions in the Commission, as the MICA schools have been part of the very fabric of Maine higher education since even before Maine became a state. MICA schools provide a diverse array of perspectives on education, and they look forward to participating in this meaningful discussion.

Please support LD 1285.

Sincerely,

Daniel W. Walker