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Maine State Senate – 2010 - 2018

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

My name is Garrett Mason. I am a resident of Lisbon Falls and a former member of the Maine Senate. During my tenure, I sponsored legislation nearly identical to LD 1648 and the Senate President, then Rep. Daughtry, graciously co-sponsored my legislation at that time. I believe that LD 1648 is born out of a deep respect for Maine's history and an enduring belief in the importance of telling our collective story in the places where it matters most.

Today, I testify in full support of LD 1648, which seeks to bring home the statues of William King and Hannibal Hamlin from the National Statuary Hall Collection and replace them with statues of Joshua Chamberlain and Margaret Chase Smith. These replacements do not diminish the contributions of King and Hamlin but instead reflect a forward-looking opportunity to honor Mainers whose legacies resonate more broadly with both our state and the nation in the 21st century.

Joshua Chamberlain, a scholar-turned-soldier, embodied the character and courage we most admire. A hero of Gettysburg, a recipient of the Medal of Honor, and later a four-term Governor of Maine, Chamberlain helped preserve the Union in its darkest hour. His leadership at Little Round Top and his role in receiving the Confederate surrender at Appomattox ensured that the very idea of America endured.

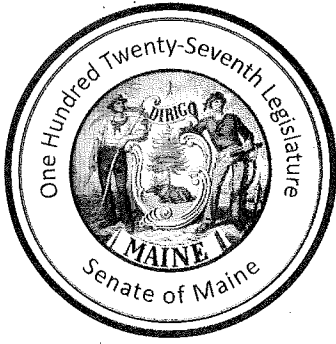
Margaret Chase Smith was a trailblazer. The first woman to serve in both chambers of Congress, she demonstrated political courage and moral clarity when it mattered most. She is emblematic of the strong women that we send to represent us from Maine. She gave voice to the values that we all hold as Mainers. As a very proud Dad to a little girl, I know part of her Maine education will be that of learning about Sen. Smith. It would be an honor to tell her that story while looking at her statue in Washington.

Now, a word about our current statutes, I believe we should bring these statutes home to Maine. Vice President Hamlin and Gov. King deserve to be celebrated here, where our schoolchildren, citizens, and visitors can engage with their legacy directly. Their return to Maine does not mark a removal, but a homecoming. A moment that allows us to reflect on our state's origins while lifting up figures who shaped the American experience on a national and even global scale.

Chamberlain and Smith exemplify what it means to be from Maine: resilient, principled, selfless, and determined. Let us honor that legacy not for ourselves, but for every visitor to the Capitol who walks through the Hall of Statues and learns a little more about what Maine has given to the world.

I have included my testimony for my bill in the 127th Legislature for further reference and study.

Thank you to the Senate President for supporting this bill and for your consideration of this important resolve. I respectfully urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 1648.



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**Testimony from
Senator Garrett Mason
in support of**

**LD 261, "Resolve, To Initiate the Procedures To Request the United States
Congress's Joint Committee on the Library To Replace a Statue in the National
Statuary Hall Collection"**

Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

February 26, 2015

Senator Langley, Representative Kornfield, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee: I am State Senator Garrett Mason and I represent District 22, which is comprised of the Androscoggin County towns of Durham, Greene, Leeds, Lisbon, Sabattus, Turner and Wales; and the Kennebec County towns of Litchfield and Wayne. I am before you today as the sponsor of LD 261, "Resolve, To Initiate the Procedures To Request the United States Congress's Joint Committee on the Library To Replace a Statue in the National Statuary Hall Collection."

We are about five years away from one of the greatest celebrations for our home, the State of Maine. On March 15, 2020, we will be celebrating Maine's bicentennial, the date in which Maine was admitted to the Union as the 23rd state in our nation under the Missouri Compromise.

Maine's first elected governor was William King. King was Maine's largest ship owner at the time and a successful merchant. He had strong business and community ties to Bath, Brunswick and Topsham, as a principal owner of Maine's first cotton mill in Brunswick and the founder and president of Bath's first bank.

King was active in local politics, starting 25 years before Maine became a state. He served in the Massachusetts General Court, representing both Topsham and Bath. He served twice as a state senator for Lincoln County; and during the War of 1812, he served as major general in the militia and provided recruiting assistance as a colonel in the United States Army.

In 1813, King petitioned Massachusetts for separation, an effort that took seven years to reach completion. After Maine entered the Union, he was elected governor of our great state and served until 1821 when he resigned in order to hold the federal position of a U.S. Commissioner.

William King's contributions to Maine and his place in our state's history are unmatched. His portrait hangs proudly on the second floor of the State House in the Hall of Flags. In

1878, the State of Maine presented a statue of William King for the National Statuary Hall Collection. It is one of two statues given by our state to the Collection. The other statue is of Hannibal Hamlin.

The National Statuary Hall Collection, which was initiated back in 1864, is composed of two statues donated by each state to honor notable persons from that particular state's history. The 100th statue and completion of the Collection occurred in 2005 with the addition of a statue from New Mexico.

Federal legislation was enacted in 2000 that permitted states to request approval from the Library of Congress for replacement statues. In the past 15 years, five states have replaced one of their first two statues. Those states include Alabama, California, Iowa, Kansas, and Michigan. Alabama chose to honor Helen Keller, California is represented with Ronald Reagan, Iowa chose Norman Borlaug, Kansas is honoring Dwight Eisenhower, and Michigan is represented by Gerald Ford. Other states are currently considering replacements or have approved replacements and are in the process of raising funds.

As important as William King is to our state's history and with the upcoming 200th anniversary of our state's birthdate, I wanted to have the opportunity to bring the William King statue home to Maine, the state that he passionately fought for to secure its independence from Massachusetts. The bill before you today outlines the process needed to allow that to happen and as well as the process needed to move forward with a replacement statue.

Equally as important to Maine's history but even more important to the unity of the United States of America, without question, is the contributions made by Joshua Chamberlain. Joshua Chamberlain loved this country. A Maine college professor by trade, Chamberlain volunteered to join the Union Army during the Civil War. Rising through the ranks, he became a highly respected and decorated officer, receiving the Medal of Honor for his role in the Battle of Gettysburg. In addition to his heroic efforts at Gettysburg in 1863, specifically at Little Round Top, which turned the tide for the Union Army, he commanded the Union troops at the surrender ceremony for the infantry of Robert E. Lee's Army at Appomattox Court House, Virginia.

After the end of the Civil War, Chamberlain came back home and become involved with politics. He was elected as Maine's 32nd Governor and served four one-year terms. When delivering his first Governor's Address in 1867 to the Maine Legislature, Chamberlain reflected on his time in the military during the Civil War. He stated that secession "...was no peaceful separation; it was war upon the Union, and that meant the destruction of the United States — body, life, and being." He further stated that "There can be no home without a country, and no life without honor."

That statement resonates with me - there can be no home without a country. Maine would not be the Maine we know and love today, the Maine that William King advocated separation from Massachusetts for almost 200 years ago, if Joshua Chamberlain and the Union Army did not succeed in the Civil War.

Thank you for your time today and your consideration of this proposal. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.