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April 11, 2023

Testimony of Representative Laurie Osher introducing
**LD 1016, An Act to Support College Student Participation as Policy
Interns for State Legislators**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government

Senator Nangle, Representative Stover and honorable members of the State and Local Government Committee. I am Laurie Osher and I represent District 25, the majority of Orono. Thank you for the opportunity to introduce **LD 1016, An Act to Support College Student Participation as Policy Interns for State Legislators**.

Engaging our state's young people to become active participants in our democracy should be a core goal of not only this Legislature but of this state in general. This legislation seeks to help advance that goal through the creation of a Legislative Policy Intern Program.

As proposed, the legislation before you would authorize the Legislative Council to establish a formal internship program. The program would provide for the placement of policy interns with Legislators to assist the Legislators with their legislative work. Interns would work up to 10 hours a week with Legislators and be paid for that work. To be eligible a student must either be attending an accredited institution of higher education in Maine or be a Maine resident attending an accredited out of state institution. Finally, the proposal directs the University of Maine System, in coordination with the Legislative Council, to designate or establish a coordinator within the system to oversee the placement of policy interns with Legislators under the internship program.

I think we can all agree that most legislators could use some extra help in their work. Legislators and legislative staff are stretched thin as the fast pace of bills, hearings and constituent issues

move forward each session. Creating an established program that pairs active and interested students with legislators seems like a great opportunity for everyone involved.

I am working with several students on an informal basis this session and have found those interactions to be rewarding and helpful for everyone. Providing a formalized process for members who are interested in working with an intern and providing them with compensation for that work is the right solution.

I urge you to support this legislation that may help all of us in our work and help to inspire a new generation of leaders who will hopefully step up to continue the important work of government in the future.

Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have for me.