



Mike Tipping
Senator, District 8

THE MAINE SENATE
131st Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and esteemed members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

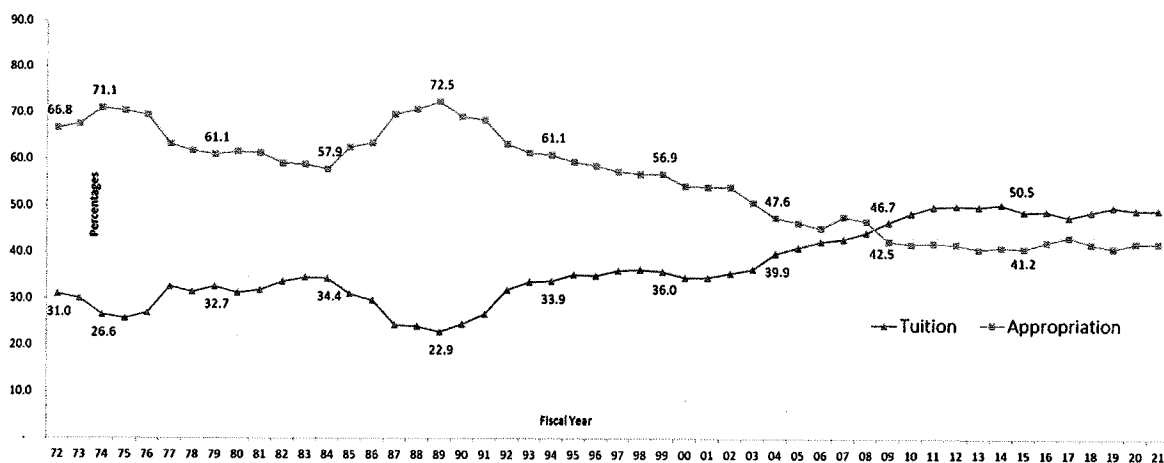
My name is Mike Tipping. I represent Senate District 8 in Penobscot County and I'm proud to present **LD 1656, An Act to Allow Student Representation Within the Governance of the University of Maine System.**

This bill would provide voting rights to the non-voting student representatives to the University of Maine System Board of Trustees, one representing the students at each of the eight UMS universities, the graduate school and the school of law. Currently these students are elected to represent their peers at their institutions and they attend board meetings, but they sit at a separate table and aren't allowed to vote. It would also remove the student Board of Trustees member currently appointed by the governor.

This is an important change. It would allow students, those who are most connected to their campuses and most invested in the future of their university system, to have a role in running it.

The current board structure was created when the state was paying most of the cost of Maine's universities, around 70% of the UMS Education and Operations budget, minus scholarships. That's no longer the case. Student and state shares be calculated in slightly different ways, but students now pay around 57% of the cost of our public universities, with the state paying 36%.

State & Student Share of UMS E&G Operating Budget



UMS Affordability and Completion Report

I've heard from many students that they feel specific decisions made by the Board and the administration, on everything from tuition to divestment in fossil fuels to program investments to

Chair, Labor and Housing Committee

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changing the traditions of Maine Day, don't represent their wishes. They also often feel broadly disconnected from and hostile towards the administration of their own university.

If we want educated young people to stay in Maine, we need to make sure they feel connected to their state and invested in its future. That starts with making sure they have a voice on campus.

While no New England public university system currently has this level of student representation on their boards of trustees, almost all have at least some elected representation of students and alumni. Maine and Rhode Island are the only systems with no elected student representation at all.

Board of Trustees Voting Members of New England State University Systems

	Student elected	Alumni elected	Legislature/board	Governor
New Hampshire	2	7	7	13
Vermont	2		18	3
Connecticut	2	2		12
Massachusetts	5			17
Rhode Island				17
Maine current				16
Maine proposed	10			15

This proposal would not necessarily represent a significant departure in university system policy. Students would have a minority voting share and, like all trustees, they would be expected to place the interests of the university system as a whole ahead of any personal agendas.

I've seen how this can work in practice. I served as a student representative on my university's Board of Governors, along with two other student representatives on a board of 12. We had to cast some difficult votes and we didn't always get our way, but the university administration always had to explain and justify their proposals to the people that would be most affected by them. I believe that's an important aspect of democratic representation that's missing from public universities in Maine and one that I hope this committee can solve.

Thank you for your consideration and I'm happy to answer any questions.