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Testimony in Support of LD 749

“An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Provide a New Dormitory Facility at the Maine School of Science and Mathematics”

**Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
April 26, 2023**

Good afternoon Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs. My name is Troy Jackson and I have the honor of serving as Senate President representing the good people of Aroostook County in the Maine Legislature. I’m here today to introduce LD 749, “An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Provide a New Dormitory Facility at the Maine School of Science and Mathematics.”

Earlier this week, I went before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs to present a complementary bill, LD 1458 “An Act to Increase Funding to the Maine School of Science and Mathematics.” I was honored to be joined by a current MSSM senior, alumni, faculty and staff, and parents of former and current students who all came out to share the tremendous impact that MSSM has in our state. They all emphasized how much this school means to students and families from every corner of our state. But after years of flat funding- since 2017- the school’s budgetary resources have been stretched to the limit. LD 1458 proposes that room and board costs be eliminated to make MSSM a *truly* accessible public institution. This change would guarantee an increase in applicants and admitted students, and heighten the need for a new and expanded dormitory.

While the biggest and most urgent requests for correcting MSSM’s neglected funding situation are contained within LD 1458, I feel strongly that this bill would help not just make up for years of what is essentially a shrinking budget due to inflation, but also help secure the future of MSSM. Because MSSM is a school for students from all over Maine, the statewide nature of a bond approval would be appropriate.

Thank you all for your time this morning and I’m happy to answer any additional questions the committee may have.