



To: Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
From: Joseph Cassidy, President, Southern Maine Community College
Re: Testimony in Support of LD 503, *An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund the Maine Community College System*
Date: April 26, 2023

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs. My name is Joe Cassidy, and I am the President of Southern Maine Community College. I am here today to strongly support LD503, *An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond to Fund the Maine Community College System*. First, I would like to thank Senator Daughtry for her long-standing support of SMCC, her hometown community college.

Having served as President of Washington County Community College, Interim President of Eastern Maine Community College, and currently President of Southern Maine Community College, I understand the broad scope of needs for the MCCS to reach its mission of creating an educated, skilled and adaptable labor force that is responsive to the changing needs of the Maine economy.

Speaking specifically to SMCC, as priorities have changed over time and new opportunities have emerged, we have responded creatively by initiating new programs, renovating existing facilities, and leasing and constructing new space. However, significant portions of necessary work remain untouched.

- At the time of SMCC's Facilities Master Plan from 2017, nearly \$50 million in needed capital and maintenance projects alone were identified, and the need is currently greater due to escalated construction costs.
- SMCC's South Portland Campus alone currently has approximately 40 buildings, many of which were part of the original Fort Preble and are over 100 years in age. The need for repairing brick veneers, roofs, windows, and doors is essential to extend the useful life of many of these key buildings.
- Funds are essential to repurpose and expand existing buildings and spaces to be

South Portland Campus

2 Fort Road • South Portland, Maine 04106
Phone: 207-741-5500

Midcoast Campus

29 Sewall Street • Brunswick, Maine 04011
Phone: 207-844-2102

state-of-the-art, ultimately increasing the number of graduates from our trade
www.smccME.edu

state-of-the-art, ultimately increasing the number of graduates from our trade programs. A prime example of this is our Health Sciences building which has numerous office suites that could be relocated to expand single-level instructional space with simulation labs.

- The addition of air conditioning units are a simple, yet costly, fix that would allow for increased instruction during Summer term.
- To support ADA standards and guidelines and the instruction and safety of students and visitors, improvements are needed to exterior and interior campus signage, roadway/parking lights, and lighted bollards, and the structure of old Fort Preble.
- Increased funds will allow us to improve our energy efficiency and be better environmental stewards by reducing our environmental footprint, all while saving significantly on our operating expenses.

Providing this support goes hand in hand with revitalizing and fulfilling Maine's workforce needs. Through the expansion and improvement of MCCC facilities, increased access will be provided to those seeking a quality education that will not only improve their lives but contribute to their communities in meaningful ways.

I provide my full support of this bill and hope you will give it your full consideration.

With appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joseph Cassidy', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Joseph Cassidy
President of Southern Maine Community College
2 Fort Road
South Portland, ME 04106