

To: Senator Peggy Rotundo  
Representative Melanie Sachs  
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

From: Dr. Betsy Libby, President

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 Betsy Libby, and I am the President of Central Maine Community College. A bond to fund general repairs, deferred maintenance items, modernization of campus buildings and educational equipment is much needed for all seven of Maine's Community Colleges. Each MCCS campus has our own specific needs that differ from institution to institution. I am grateful to be able to have the opportunity to speak with you today about some of Central Maine Community College's needs.

Our largest building, Jalbert Hall, was built in the 1960's. Since then, wings of the building have been updated and modernized, but not all of them. The wing most in need of updating is the one that houses our automotive technology department. Making improvements in that area will provide opportunities for the program to further expand innovation and enhance education particularly for electronic vehicle maintenance and repair. Outside of this wing, on other exterior areas on campus, general repairs are needed to walkways, stairs and parking lots. Also, building exteriors are in need of sealing and caulking.

Many of the College's career technical programs need more space to educate students to prepare them to enter Maine's workforce. I will use nursing and heating ventilation air conditioning—HVAC—as examples. Both are industries with workforce shortages in Maine. The college has prepared a plan to increase the number of nursing students enrolled each year from 64 to 104. This includes a day program, evening and weekend programs, along with a program in rural Maine to meet students when and where they are available to be educated. With more equipment and simulation resources, we will grow this even further.

In HVAC, we found ourselves in a position in August where there were more students than we had space. We reworked the schedule and use of space to be able to double capacity in the program. It was a challenge, it was tight, but we did it. When the HVAC program started in 2019, there were 15 students and that has grown by 170% today. With more equipment, we could educate more students in these high-need well-paying fields. For some of these programs we just don't have the right space in the right place. With some resources we can help reconfigure our spaces to meet today's needs.

We are currently going through a year-long process of much needed roof repairs at the college. We will need ongoing continuing maintenance on the investment, which this bond would provide. I know other MCCC campuses also have this same concern.

We have several boilers that need updating. There are aging heating and AC systems that need maintenance or repairs. Through conversations with my fellow presidents, I know other campuses have similar needs.

Unfortunately, in this day and age institutions need to be increasingly concerned with campus safety planning and response. This bond would provide the opportunity to modernize facilities with the latest security such as automatic door locking mechanisms and enhanced exterior lighting. College campuses take the health and safety of our students and employees very seriously and available funding would be used wisely.

I hope these examples are helpful as you consider LD 503. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak with you today. I am happy to answer any questions.