

**Testimony of Daniel W. Walker, Preti Flaherty, on behalf of the Maine Independent
Colleges Association in Support of
LD 2169, An Act to Support the Development of Workforce Housing to Promote Economic
Development in Maine
Joint Select Committee on Housing
February 6, 2024**

Sen. Pierce, Rep. Gere, and Members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing,

My name is Daniel Walker, representing the Maine Independent Colleges Association (MICA), in support of LD 2169.

MICA represents 11 private, nonprofit colleges and universities¹ throughout Maine that serve over 25,000 students, over 7,000 of whom are from Maine. These institutions are located in municipalities of all sizes across the State, from Maine's largest city to small tourist towns and farming communities. Collectively, the 11 institutions are an economic engine and an integral part of Maine's Higher Educational eco-system as well as an important part of the Maine economy. Together they:

- Employ over 6,000 Maine workers.
- Have a total payroll in excess of \$340 million.
- Have direct expenditures of over \$615 million.
- Have an estimated economic impact on Maine's economy of over a billion dollars each year.
- Directly contribute close to \$2M to municipalities.
- Value of community service is over \$24 million.
- Provide nearly \$55 million in financial aid to Maine students.
- Draw nearly 300,000 visitors to our state each year

MICA supports this effort by Senator Daughtry to incentivize the construction of more workforce housing in Maine. A recent report from Maine Housing declared that the state needs to build up to 80,000 new homes by 2030 to accommodate its existing population and folks expected to move to Maine, which means Maine housing needs to increase by 11%.

Our members have had difficulty attracting and retaining faculty and staff to our campuses, as a result of the state's limited housing inventory, high demand, high prices, and high interest rates. The affordable housing crisis is acute around many of our campuses, and any legislative efforts to expand the breadth of workforce housing in order to help workers in the Maine business and nonprofit community secure housing are much appreciated.

###

¹ Bates College, Bowdoin College, Colby College, College of the Atlantic, Husson University, Maine College of Art, Roux Institute at Northeastern University, St. Joseph's College of Maine, Thomas College, Unity College, and University of New England.