



James Libby, Ph.D.
Senator, District 22

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony of Senator James D. Libby

Sponsor of L.D. 198, "An Act to Prohibit the University of Maine System Campus Police from Issuing a Parking Violation to a Visitor of the University of Maine System"

Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Public Hearing, Monday, March 3, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

My name is Jim Libby, and I am a State Senator representing Senate District # 22, comprised of the towns of Naples, Sebago, Baldwin, and Standish in Cumberland County; Hiram and Porter in Oxford County; and, Limington, Limerick, Cornish, Parsonsfield, Newfield, Acton, and Shapleigh, in the County of York.

It is my honor to bring to your attention the contents of L.D. 198, "An Act to Prohibit the University of Maine System Campus Police from Issuing a Parking Violation to a Visitor of the University of Maine System." Committee members, I'd like to begin by discussing the purpose for bringing you a bill of this nature.

This is a bill requested by a former constituent. Many of my constituents were shocked to learn that a new policy was implemented at the University of Southern Maine in Gorham. This policy charges for parking for all who visit the Gorham campus.

Why visit the Gorham campus? My constituents are often arriving as a grandparent or parent of a child who has had their athletic competition for the schools scheduled at USM. Soccer moms, hockey dads, musicians' parents, grandparents, cousins, and friends. You name it. People come to USM to watch track meets, listen to school concerts, attend a play, attend a forum, attend a ball game, and many, many other functions.

The University of Southern Maine has done more to irritate local residents through this policy of charging parking fees and billing people through the mail than any policy in recent memory. Consider this – now a 3rd party has been contracted to issue parking tickets and send them through the mail. Who authorized this 3rd party to access the names and addresses of my constituents and send them parking tickets through the U.S. mail? We already know since the issue came up in this committee earlier this year.

I want to know the following: What is the cost of the new scanners that record license plates? What is the cost of the kiosks that were erected to make my constituents pay their bills on site? What is the cost of the mailings? What is the break-even period after all costs and revenue are calculated? What is the revenue forecast from this program?

To the University of Southern Maine: stop balancing your budget on the backs of my rural Maine constituents. Further, as a member of this Committee, I do not appreciate USM thumbing their nose at me and complaining that they are “underfunded, and therefore they must charge for parking now.” What a way to lose recruits! What a way to soil a good reputation.

Gorham is a small town. This is a town that does not utilize parking meters because they want to encourage people to visit. This USM parking policy causes some people to park out on the road and walk up to the campus, which causes the restaurants in the downtown to lose their usual available parking. Will USM compensate these businesses for their lost revenue?

This entire decision has been a debacle. Quietly, members of the University System, trustees, employees, and others, will tell you what a terrible decision this has been.

My constituents feel that they have no recourse but to put a bill in of this nature.

My intention is to submit an amendment for work session that limits this bill to the USM campus in Gorham, which is the intended subject for the bill to address.

Thank you.

Are there any questions from the Committee?