



**University of Maine System Testimony in Opposition to  
LD 198, An Act to Prohibit the University of Maine System Campus Police from  
Issuing a Citation or Summons Related to a Parking Violation to a Visitor of the  
University of Maine System — Presented by UMS Chief External & Governmental  
Affairs Officer Samantha Warren — March 3, 2025**

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education & Cultural Affairs: My name is Sam Warren and I am the Chief External & Governmental Affairs Officer for the University of Maine System (UMS).

**UMS strongly opposes LD 198, which would limit our universities' ability to generate the revenue necessary to maintain critical infrastructure and our authority to maintain campus safety and accessibility for students, employees, and visitors.**

As this Committee is well aware, Maine's public universities are burdened by \$1.6 billion in deferred maintenance due to decades of underfunding by the State and our commitment to student affordability. More than half of our buildings and three-quarters of our residence halls have not been meaningfully renovated in at least 50 years, and deteriorating campus roadways and parking are also desperately in need of investment. For example, the University of Southern Maine (USM) has more than \$11 million in parking infrastructure deferred maintenance and the University of Maine needs at least \$4.3 million just for pavement repairs and an additional \$1 million for parking lot lighting.

To generate revenue to partially offset the costs of operating and maintaining parking infrastructure, including garage construction, ADA compliance, resurfacing and sealing, plowing, safety lighting, and emergency call box installation, some UMS universities charge for parking. Our universities also issue citations when there are parking violations, typically starting with warnings and then escalating to tickets with small fines. This practice is consistent with how other public and private entities in Maine — including postsecondary institutions — enforce parking and public safety policies and best practices.

Citations and the revenue they generate support more effective parking operations and management. **Parking enforcement ensures campus and community members have the appropriate parking permits, helps maintain traffic flow and turnover so spaces are available for those who need them to access university programs and services, and promotes safety by preventing obstructive parking.** This is especially important at larger universities like UMaine and USM, where demand for parking exceeds available spaces.

LD 198 would prevent university police from ticketing those who park illegally, including in spaces reserved for people with disabilities, in fire or other emergency vehicle spaces or lanes, or directly on a roadway. Under this bill, one could park in a manner that obstructs

traffic, blocks a fire hydrant, or takes up multiple spaces without any consequences. And by removing enforcement, the purchase of parking permits would be essentially voluntary, resulting in a significant loss of revenue at most of our public universities that presumably the Legislature is not prepared to offset with additive appropriation.

There are additionally a number of technical issues with this bill. For example, at UMaine and its regional campus in Machias and at USM, campus police officers do not actually oversee or enforce parking, including the issuance of citations. Additionally, when parking citations are issued, it is based on information connected to the vehicle's license plate and related registration, which does not indicate whether the vehicle's owner is a student or employee of UMS or a visitor to campus.

It's no secret that there have been parking challenges at our most urban campus, just as there have been in the city in which it is located and in many other Maine communities. To improve parking management and better meet increased demand, USM constructed an additional 638-space garage on its growing Portland campus and implemented automated parking and enforcement systems in Portland and Gorham in 2023. In the first year, the university handled an average of 10,000 parking transactions per day and less than 4% resulted in a citation. In an effort to further improve the user experience and access to parking, USM made a number of improvements directly informed by campus and community feedback and that went into effect this past fall. These included improved signage; extended grace periods; expanded payment options including with kiosks, through texting, and at lot exits; and contracting with a new enforcement vendor. The result has been a more seamless parking experience and fewer citations and complaints.

Given this, **LD 198 is unnecessary. It would compromise public safety, including by making it more difficult for emergency responders to reach those in need. And its passage would undermine the System's duty to preserve its own fiscal responsibility — which you have intentionally upheld in the past, the authority of professional law enforcement, and well-established campus parking and traffic systems.** We urge you to reject this bill and to instead prioritize increasing State appropriations for UMS operations and capital improvements so that Maine's public universities can be less reliant on raising revenue from our students and the public.

Thank you and I welcome your questions.