

Testimony from David Lewis, Jr.
Windham
In Support of L.D. 680 An Act to Support Higher Education in Maine by Providing Funds to Maine's
Community Colleges.

Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
March 17, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is David Lewis. I am a resident of Windham, ME and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at Central Maine Community College. I am here today in support of LD 680 which would provide vital resources to institutions like Central Maine Community College. Specifically, I want to highlight the crucial role that tutoring services play in student achievement and the urgent need to expand these resources on community college campuses.

I've seen firsthand how impactful tutoring can be. As a student on the brink of academic dismissal in my undergraduate degree, I struggled to balance multiple jobs, family responsibilities, and coursework. After connecting with the tutoring center, I was able to turn things around, regain my academic standing, and ultimately graduate successfully. Now pursuing my doctoral degree, I am a living example of how tutoring has supported my academic success throughout my educational journey.

Tutoring services are essential for community college students, many of whom face unique challenges that make their academic journey more difficult. Our students often juggle full-time jobs, family obligations, and financial constraints. Tutoring can be the critical difference between success and failure. Unfortunately, students who fail to utilize tutoring often earn grades that place them on academic probation, suspension, or dismissal. When these students attempt to return from suspension or dismissal, we prioritize tutoring because we know it's key to their success.

At Central Maine Community College, tutoring services provide one-on-one support that helps students build confidence, understand complex material, and develop the skills they need to excel. Yet, despite its proven impact, our tutoring resources are stretched thin. Demand for tutoring continues to grow, yet we are challenged with limited staffing, outdated resources, and a lack of dedicated space to provide adequate support.

Investing in tutoring services as part of the Student Success and Retention Bill would allow us to hire additional tutors, provide more flexible hours to meet the needs of working students, and improve our facilities to create a more effective learning environment. By expanding tutoring resources, we can empower students to stay enrolled, complete their programs, and enter Maine's workforce prepared to succeed.

Supporting this bill is an investment in Maine's future. It ensures that students at Central Maine Community College — and community colleges across the state — have the resources they need to overcome obstacles, achieve their educational goals, and contribute to our economy. I urge you to prioritize this funding and support the success of our students.

Thank you for your time and consideration.