

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs. Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs committee. My name is Jake Adams, I am here on my own time to ask these committees to provide more resources for Maine Maritime Academy Faculty & Staff in LD 681. I live in Holden and work at Maine Maritime Academy in the IT department as a Systems Integration Specialist, primarily supporting Admissions and Financial Aid.

I have testified several times on the need for Maine to fund Maine Maritime Academy in parity with other Maine Public Universities and spoke about how our funding compares with similar institutions such as SUNY, Texas A&M, Cal Maritime, etc and how they receive over 40% of their operating budget from their state. While at the same time we receive roughly 23% of our operating budget from the state.

Similarly, institutions within the State of Maine that have a comparable number of full-time equivalents (FTEs) receive around 44% of their operating budget from the state. While this leaves us at a bit of a loss, we do quite well, according to a study from the Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce, out of 4500 colleges studied we are number 6 in terms of return on investment, and we are number 1 for low-income students. All of this remains true. I thank you for your decision to help us in the 130th legislative session with additional funding but of course that was a small step, we need you to help make progress on the way toward bringing Maine Maritime Academy to parity in regard to funding Maine's public universities.

While it is true that our tuition is higher than other comparable institutions and that is largely a consequence of the lack of parity in funding; I want to mention another unfortunate consequence, and that is our wages. Our wages are low, there are employees that work for the Academy and qualify for benefits like SNAP. Provided with adequate funding it should become possible to pay a competitive wage thereby allowing the Academy to continue to attract and retain exemplary faculty and staff. Certainly, additional funding would remove at least one barrier in the way of all our employees earning a living wage.

Thank you for your time and your consideration. I implore you to support and equalize funding for Maine Maritime Academy by passing LD 681.

Jake Adams

Holden, Maine