



**University of Maine System Testimony In Opposition to LD 1285, An Act to Prohibit the Consideration of Legacy Preferences or Donor Preferences in Postsecondary Educational Institution Admissions — Presented by UMS Chief External & Governmental Affairs Officer Samantha Warren — April 10, 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).

Maine's public universities are a national leader in student access and achievement. Our region-leading affordability, initiatives like early college and direct and guaranteed admissions, flexible online offerings, and effective student support ensure that **postsecondary educational opportunity and upward mobility through UMS is within everyone's reach**. For example, more than 40% of our students are the first in their families to go to college and they are twice as likely to graduate from our System as first-generation students nationally. Our alumni earn more than double Maine's median income.

Consistent with our public mission and the needs of Maine learners and employers for more workers with knowledge, skills, and educational credentials, our institutions have essentially open admission policies. Even the R1, D1 University of Maine has accepted 96.55% of applicants over the past five years, while the University of Southern Maine and the University of Maine at Farmington have acceptance rates of 97%.

**No UMS university ever gives preference to an applicant based on their familial relationship to a donor or graduate.** Nevertheless, our System opposes this bill because we have serious concerns about the Legislature dictating the conditions of student admissions. While well-intended, we believe giving any political body say over student admissions at public and private institutions in the state undermines the authority of our respective independent governing boards and the expertise of our enrollment management experts, who are best positioned to determine standards for accepting students.

**If the Legislature wants to promote postsecondary education access and attainment, it should meaningfully increase appropriations for Maine's public universities and for the need-based Maine State Grant program and avoid passage of unfunded mandates — the cost of which ultimately fall on our state's students.**

Thank you for your ongoing support of the University of Maine System and I welcome your questions.