



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony  
In Support of

**LD 1255 An Act to Ensure In-state Tuition for Postsecondary Students Who Are Registered to Vote in the State and to Amend Eligibility Requirements for the Free Community College Tuition Program**

Good Morning Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, I am Representative Shelley Rudnicki, and I represent House District #67, made up of the towns of Fairfield and Benton. I am here today to introduce LD 1255 **An Act to Ensure In-state Tuition for Postsecondary Students Who Are Registered to Vote in the State and to Amend Eligibility Requirements for the Free Community College Tuition Program**

This bill will allow any college student who is encouraged to vote or allowed to vote in Maine to be eligible for in-state tuition. If the colleges and universities in Maine are going to encourage students to vote in Maine's local elections, and in some cases give class credit to vote in Maine, then they should be giving them in-state tuition.

I know that this will affect the budgets of the colleges and universities, but if we truly believe in fairness and equity, this should pass. If the colleges and universities don't like the reduction in revenue from the decrease in less out-of-state tuition students then they should actively inform students that voting in Maine for non-residents is not the appropriate thing to do. They should be voting absentee in their own states and towns where their parents claim them as dependents on their tax returns. Also, it should be noted that if the students are considered residents in Maine for the purposes of voting, then their out of state parents claiming them as dependents on their income tax form puts them in jeopardy with the Internal Revenue Service. This inconsistency in paperwork could affect their student loans and their FAFSA applications. When my daughter was in college in Massachusetts, she voted absentee in Maine because her residence was Maine. When she graduated and got an apartment in Massachusetts, she was required to change her license and car registration within 60 days.

The other aspect of this bill is for "free community college". It puts guardrails around eligibility. Besides being a Maine Resident for 2 years prior to the "free community college" or as a high school graduate from a Maine High School, the student must maintain at least 2.5 GPA per semester or they will be required to pay for their tuition. Requiring students to maintain a 2.5 GPA or a C+ makes sure that the Maine taxpayer is getting their money's worth.

Thank You,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shelley Rudnicki".

Shelley Rudnicki  
State Representative