



**University of Maine System Testimony**  
**Regarding 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 — Presented by UMS Chief External &**  
**Governmental Affairs Officer Samantha Warren — April 28, 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).

A decade ago, billboards across New England began boasting that students could come to our flagship for the price of theirs. Since the start of this “Flagship Match,” our System’s out-of-state enrollment has exploded nearly 60%. Given the state’s demographic and workforce challenges, **we are proud that our public universities are now the largest importer of talent to Maine.** This year, UMS recruited more than 10,000 students here, and a recent University of Maine study shows that more than one-third of our out-of-state students will be retained in Maine to live and work after they graduate.

Typically, the out-of-state tuition rate, which is not directly subsidized by the Legislature and Maine taxpayers, is higher than the in-state rate. The enrollment and revenue generated by out-of-state students has been critical to UMS and to sustaining our public universities where the law requires them to be, especially given our System’s commitment to affordability for Maine families and inadequate State appropriation.

How UMS determines residency for tuition rate classification differs from how other institutions determine residency for other purposes, including for voting and taxation. UMS policy generally requires that an individual lives in Maine for purposes other than education for one year prior to their first day of classes in order to qualify for in-state tuition.

**If the Legislature wishes to align eligibility for voting in the state with eligibility for in-state tuition at Maine’s public universities, our System would require as much as \$80.14 million annually in additional State appropriation** on an ongoing basis to offset the loss of out-of-state tuition revenue. This would be supplemental to the essential operational funding increase (4%) provided by Governor Mills in her FY26-27 biennial budget proposal and recently endorsed by a bipartisan majority of this Committee. Given a funding increase of this amount is unlikely, UMS cannot support LD 1255 but welcomes conversations with this Committee about State policy and investment that could further enhance our recruitment and retention efforts and the civic engagement of our students, including those from out-of-state.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Maine’s public universities and I welcome your questions.