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President of the Senate

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

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Testimony in Support of
LD 1648, "Resolve, to Honor Margaret Chase Smith and Joshua Chamberlain in the National
Statuary Hall"
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
May 5, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Mattie Daughtry. I serve as President of the Maine Senate and proudly represent Senate District 23, which includes Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, Pownal, Chebeague Island, and part of Yarmouth.

I am honored to be before you today to introduce LD 1648, "Resolve, to Honor Margaret Chase Smith and Joshua Chamberlain in the National Statuary Hall." This bill proposes that Maine update the two statues representing our state in the U.S. Capitol's National Statuary Hall Collection — replacing the statues of Hannibal Hamlin and William King with statues of two other giants of Maine's history: Margaret Chase Smith and Joshua Chamberlain.

Each state is allowed to contribute two statues to this national collection, honoring notable figures from their history. In 2000, Congress passed Public Law 106–554, which formally authorized states to request the replacement of statues they had previously donated. Since then, thirteen states have completed at least one replacement. This process allows states like ours to ensure that our national representation continues to reflect our evolving understanding of history and the values we want to share with the country.

Margaret Chase Smith was a trailblazer in every sense of the word. She was the first woman in U.S. history to serve in both the House and the Senate, and her legacy is defined by courage and conscience. Her "Declaration of Conscience" in 1950, standing up to the fearmongering of McCarthyism, remains one of the most courageous speeches in the history of American politics. Her principled leadership continues to inspire leaders across the nation—across party lines.

Joshua Chamberlain represents another facet of Maine's legacy: moral leadership in moments of profound national crisis. A Civil War hero who played a decisive role at the Battle of Gettysburg, Chamberlain was awarded the Medal of Honor and later chosen to preside over the surrender of Confederate troops at Appomattox—an act he carried out with both dignity and grace. After the war, he returned to Maine to serve as Governor and later as President of Bowdoin College. His leadership in both wartime and peacetime offers a powerful example of service, resilience, and unity.

This resolve directs the Maine Arts Commission, the Maine State Museum Commission, and the Maine Historic Preservation Commission to formally request approval from the Joint Committee of Congress on the Library to make these replacements. Once approved, the commissions would oversee the creation and placement of the new statues in Washington, D.C., and respectfully relocate the statues of King and Hamlin to appropriate places of honor here in Maine—such as the State House or Capitol grounds—where their contributions will continue to be recognized and celebrated.

Let me be clear: this is not an erasure of our history. Hannibal Hamlin and William King will continue to be honored here in Maine for their significant contributions. Rather, this is an opportunity to update our representation in Washington to reflect the continued evolution of Maine's story and to showcase leaders whose examples remain urgent and deeply relevant to today's America.

With LD 1648, we have the opportunity to tell a broader, more resonant story about Maine's impact on the nation and to inspire future generations with the lives of two leaders whose examples speak powerfully to the challenges of today.

I respectfully ask for your support of this measure, and I welcome any questions.

President of the Senate, Senate District 23

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