

Peter Shelton
Belfast

Good Afternoon Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Distinguished Members of the Committee, my name is Peter Shelton and I'm currently a rising sophomore at Maine Maritime Academy and an Alumni of the Maine Ocean School.

In the past, when I have spoken before the committee, I have discussed what high achieving meant to me, what my goals were upon graduation, and how I hoped that the Maine Ocean School would have prepared me for what would come next. Now, as an Alumni, I can reflect upon previous testimonies and recollect on statements I made.

In a previous testimony, I expressed my concerns as a senior in high school preparing to begin their first year as a college student. Maine Maritime Academy is known for its rigorous academics, especially for students who plan to participate in the Regiment of Midshipmen while pursuing a career in the maritime field. During my time at the Academy this first year, I found that instead of struggling with academics, I was able to do quite well and in many cases, enjoy them. In part, I would attribute this to the skills that I developed while at the Maine Ocean School. In addition to the challenging, college-level courses I experienced while at the Maine Ocean School, the teachers at MOS encouraged me to develop my skills as a student and push myself in the classroom which I largely believe to be the reason that I was able to do so well this first year.

Perhaps what concerned me more than the upcoming academic challenges, was the social change that I was going to be experiencing as a first-year student at a Maritime Academy. It's no secret that starting college can be a nerve-racking experience and the newfound freedom can be a lot to take in as a young adult. While at the Maine Ocean School, my teachers and advisors encouraged me to get involved and play an active role within my community, and perhaps more importantly, build connections. Within my first year at the Academy, I have joined the largely volunteer fire/rescue department that services the Castine area, as well as become active within the Regiment of Midshipmen where I now serve a specialized role as a Yeomen and Emergency-Squad or "E-Squad" responder aboard the training ship. Where it not for my advisors encouraging me to pursue roles outside of just my academics, I don't think I would have been as likely to get active in the community around me.

The Maine Ocean School program is a unique opportunity for many students who don't fit into your typical "cookie-cutter" classroom. It presents students with the ability to work one on one with their teachers and encourages students to not just pass but exceed both with their academics, as well as in their community.

If I could ask you to take away one thing from the testimonies delivered today, it would be that the public school system works for many people, but not for everyone, programs like the Maine Ocean School offer students that don't necessarily fit into a typical school environment the opportunity to flourish both academically and in their communities. Because of this, I ask you to vote in favor of LD 1389, so that future students may also benefit from the Maine Ocean School program as I have.

Thank You,
Peter Shelton