



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MAINE

Counselor Education
University of Southern Maine
37 College Avenue
Gorham, Maine 04038

April 27, 2021

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and other members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee:

My name is Charles Bernacchio and I am currently a Professor at the University of Southern Maine where I teach graduate students seeking the Masters of Science in Counseling. I am here to testify in support of LD 1253 and LD 1391 that are being considered by the Legislature which will correct the University of Maine System's management of its Board of Trustees that has excluded the faculty and staff viewpoints from key debates and which have affected our campuses and our institutional capability to sustain Maine's quality of public higher education. Having served for more than three decades in Maine's higher education system, earlier as a professional staff and adjunct faculty members, then later as a tenured professor, I have observed many changes within the system and what the faculty and staff have endured in fulfilling our commitment to the exceptional, quality of public higher education in Maine. We are a key constituent as UMS employees, tax payers and for many of us and our children who received their postsecondary educations in the Maine public higher education university system which needs to allow us to voice our opinions and perspectives to its UMS Board of Trustees. Given it's a public education board which allows us to attend and sit in during meetings to listen to actions being considered by this important board, yet we aren't being given a voice without having a voting representative on this board. It's sad to have had certain constituents over the years being represented including students who can present their positions on key issues and pending decisions which are having implications for our campuses, our learning communities,

our students, our faculty and staff and our retirees. These two proposed bills will change the board representation so that it will include voting representatives from the faculty and staff of the UMS in the future. It give us, as constituents, specific voting representatives on the Board providing us with the chance to be included at the table and to be sure that our voices are heard. The proposals seek to have those specific by-laws for the board changed, the governance regulations and its representation revised in order to permit the additional faculty and staff representation for conducting the board's business, its system oversight and the UMS policy decisions being made in the future.

I hope that you will do what you know in good conscience is the right thing to do and approve these bills!

Sincerely yours,

Charles Bernacchio

Dr. Charles Bernacchio, Professor of Counselor Education