



**Department of Economics and Sociology**

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April 21, 2021

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

My name is Dr. Wendy Chapkis. I have been a faculty member at the University of Southern Maine for more than 25 years and I am writing to you in support of two bills before your committee: LD 1391 and LD 1253.

Both LD 1391 and LD 1253 focus on strengthening the composition of the Board of Trustees by adding the voices, perspectives, and experiences of faculty and staff. LD 1391 is the stronger of those two bills, in my estimation, as it would add 6 new seats to the BoT with 3 specifically intended for faculty, and an additional 3 for any current or retired non-administrative employee of the UMS. LD 1253, in contrast, is a much more modest reform, adding only one faculty and one staff seat to the existing board. Both measures however move in the right direction.

It is shocking that the perspectives of current employees of the UMS are currently entirely absent. How is it possible that there has never been a member of the BoT with experience working in public sector education? Adding faculty and staff members to the BoT, would not only provide the Board with the urgently needed perspective of those who actually work in public higher education, it would also give the Board access to those with institutional memory; those of us who work on University of Maine System campuses know which past initiatives have been successful – and which haven't – because we do the resulting work every day. Our viewpoints are urgently needed when those decisions are made. In both bills, the new members would have full voting rights.

Please support adding the now missing perspectives to the BoT of those who actually work in public higher education in the state of Maine. This is a commonsense and urgently needed reform to the existing structure of the Board of Trustees.

Thank you for your service to the state. Please feel free to contact me if I can offer any additional information about these pieces of legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Wendy Chapkis'.

Wendy Chapkis

(Professor of Sociology and Women & Gender Studies, University of Southern Maine)

112 Sherman St.

Portland, ME 04101

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Wendy Chapkis  
Portland, Maine

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