

Stan Hileman
WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY

Dear Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,
I am writing in support of Bills LD 1253 and LD 1391, both of which concern the addition of faculty and staff to the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System. My name is Stan Hileman and I am a Professor of Physiology and Pharmacology at West Virginia University. I am currently one of two faculty representatives that sit on our Board of Governors. Our Board also includes one staff representative and one student representative who is also the President of the Student Government. We are granted the full rights and voting privileges that are enjoyed by the other members of our Board. My position is an elected position, and I am currently serving my 5th year on the Board. In addition to the faculty, staff, and student representatives, there are 13 other Board members, all of whom are appointed by our Governor. They represent many different careers and backgrounds, many of whom are prominent lawyers or business leaders in the state. They collectively are an awesome assemblage of knowledge and expertise and it has been my experience that they truly want to do what is best for West Virginia University and work closely with our University President, E. Gordon Gee, to move our University forward. However, the decisions we make not only impact our University, but also our state as WVU is one of the largest economic driving forces in West Virginia. That said, while these individuals are at the pinnacle of their given professions, it is my experience that they are not always overly familiar with the peculiar nature of a university or the day-to-day operations of the institution. Some want to treat it purely as a business, and while there is certainly that aspect to consider, that does not encompass the entirety of the operation. The worth and work of a university cannot be captured completely in dollars and cents. Thus, it is our responsibility as faculty representatives to add the faculty perspective to discussions and provide an insight that they otherwise would not have. To their credit, in the years I have been on our Board, I have always felt that our views and opinions have been considered as equally as any others (and sometimes more) because they realize the value of those first-hand perspectives. As I'm sure our Board Chair, David Alvarez, and President Gee would agree, our input has changed and shaped opinions and decisions for the betterment of WVU. In the end, our goal is to make our university the best it can be in order to serve our state to its fullest, and having faculty representatives on the Board ensures that that is indeed the case. Thank you for your consideration of these bills.