

April 26, 2021

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

FROM: Dr. Lisa Leduc, Professor of Criminal Justice, University of Maine at Presque Isle

RE: Support for:

LD 1253 *An Act to Add a Faculty Member and Nonfaculty Member to the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System* (Representative Millett);

and

LD 1391 *An Act to Enhance the Educational Expertise and Knowledge of the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System* (Representative Collings)

Thank you very much for taking the time to review my supporting opinion on these two bills. I had hoped to testify live and offer my thoughts to you directly but unfortunately most of my courses meet on Tuesdays and since this is the last week of the semester, I am very much needed in the classroom.

I wholeheartedly support both of these bills. As a 19 year faculty member and a 6 year faculty representative to the Board of Trustees I have seen firsthand the problems associated with the lack of faculty/staff voice on the Board.

First – let me clarify that as faculty representative to the Board, I am not a member of the Board – not a trustee. Along with colleagues from each campus I am invited to open Board Meetings and have an opportunity to present faculty points of view at the Academic and Student Affairs subcommittee meetings. We are not given any voting power nor any speaking order standing during regular Board meetings and we are not in attendance in Executive Sessions.

While the Board has an important fiscal responsibility to the University of Maine System and the state of Maine – they also need to have an informed understanding of higher education and the day to day workings of our campuses. Decisions they make effect students in the classroom yet there are no trustees that have experience in teaching/research or supporting those students directly – experience as faculty and/or staff. I have seen too often that fiscal concerns and even misinformation have overridden sound academic practices and standards. Just one example is the recent move to seek unified accreditation for the entire system rather than separate accreditations for each campus. While many faculty concerns were brought up in subcommittees; these were not fully presented at the full Board meetings resulting in what I believe to be an uninformed vote on the matter. It is not that one or two faculty/staff trustees would or could or even should change the voting patterns of the

Board – but rather that these trustees would provide much needed 'on the ground' perspectives to the decisions being made.

Finally, I would like to commend both Representative Millett and Representative Billings on their hard work and research in developing these bills. Not only did they meet with constituents and stakeholders within faculty and staff groups, but they also researched other university systems with boards that included faculty and staff to identify the best practices and opportunities that would be realized with this change. Their thoughtful consideration is very much appreciated.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration

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