

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 classified staff position as a Special Event Coordinator Senior at West Virginia University affords me the opportunity to be part of Staff Council. Classified Staff Councils were established in West Virginia state code on March 8, 2003 with House Bill 2224 for the purpose of “providing the classified employees at each institution a means to share information and discuss issues affecting them or the efficient and effective operations of their institution with the President of the institution and its Board of Governors.” I also currently serve as the classified staff representative on the West Virginia University Board of Governors. My position on the board is an elected one by my classified staff peers and I receive the full rights and voting privileges that all other members of our Board have including the faculty and student representatives. Our governing board consists of 17 members of which 13 are appointed by our governor, two faculty, one student and one classified staff. The appointed members represent several different careers and backgrounds which makes for a vast knowledge base and experience. As different as each are to one another, the opposite is true when it comes to doing what is in the best interest of West Virginia University.

As the classified staff representative, the knowledge I have is valued by other board members who may not fully understand the day-to-day operations of the University. It is my job to educate them about the role of classified staff in order to make informed decisions for the university to thrive. Sometimes those decisions extend beyond our university as the flagship higher education institution of our state. Likewise, I learn from them as well as they apply their business practices and knowledge to the issues we face as a board. Without the combination of our experiences and knowledge, the university would surely suffer as decisions would be made without the well-rounded knowledge we all bring to the table.

Classified staff are just as important as faculty and students in order for the University to be successful in our mission. In the three short years I have been a Board of Governors member, I can attest that my views and opinions are valued by the other appointed members. There have been times when they were surprised by information that I have shared that they would not have otherwise considered. Not all information shared changes the vote or outcome but I take comfort in the fact that I am the voice for classified staff that they wouldn't otherwise have. That's not to say I only care about those I represent. That is far from the truth. My end goal, just like the other 16 members, is to make sure our University is the best it can be so we can serve our students and our great state of West Virginia. I don't believe this would be possible without the input from the three entities that make up our university.

I hope you will consider and approve the addition of those who help make the University of Maine System a success. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lisa A. Martin
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