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

Both of these bills 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, since it would add 6 new seats to the BoT, with three specifically intended for faculty, and three for any current or retired non-administrative employee of the UMS. LD 1253 is a much more modest reform, adding only one faculty and one staff seat to the existing board. Both measures, however, move us in the right direction.

It makes no sense that the perspectives of current employees of the UMS are presently 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, but 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 work every day. Our viewpoints are urgently needed when those decisions are made.

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 much 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 you have any questions that I can answer.