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Poland

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

I'd like to submit this written testimony in support of LD 1253 and LD 1391 (descriptions are provided below). I appreciate your time and hope that you hear the voices of the faculty and staff of the UMaine System.

I am a tenure-track faculty member at the University of Southern Maine and have been with the institution for 3 years. I was raised in Lisbon, Maine but after high school left to further my education and eventually seek job opportunities in Massachusetts. It wasn't until 2018 that I was able to find my way back home through USM. My husband and I have settled in Poland with our 2 children and hope to stay here for the long-haul.

These Bills are important to me because the UMaine System is undergoing dramatic reform, causing a disturbance to the balance of power that previously existed between the Sister Schools, the System and the Board of Trustees. We've already experienced unilateral decision making occurring at the System and Board levels, circumventing the Union and spirit of shared governance. These decisions have impacted our health care and curriculum. I fear that if the balance is not restored by ensuring a voice for faculty and staff on the BOT, we will continue to see top-down decisions that negatively impact students, faculty and staff.

My primary concern is around the influence BOT and UM System has had on curriculum development. Faculty are experts within our content areas and should have oversight over curriculum, delivery and research. This pillar of academic freedom is what propels higher education forward. Representation of faculty and staff on the BOT will help to preserve these foundational principles by giving a voice to its guardians. In my work developing a Masters Program, I have exercised and appreciate the ability to collaborate across the System. I just want to ensure that this type of collaboration happens organically and is initiated by the faculty who oversee programs and curricula such as my own.

Faculty and staff representation to the BOT is not a new model and may be observed in WV and Oregon. Please help us continue to move forward with single accreditation in a responsible way by supporting these two Bills.

Finally, I'd like to reference an old adage- "If you're not at the table, you're probably on the menu". Please keep us off the menu.

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**Bill Descriptions:**

**LD 1253: An Act To Add a Faculty Member and Nonfaculty Staff Member to the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System, sponsored by Representative Rebecca Millett**  
This bill adds 2 members to the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System, a faculty member and a nonfaculty staff member. The members are full voting members, serve 5-year terms and are appointed by the Governor from a list provided by their respective unions. The member for each seat may not come from the same campus in any 2 consecutive terms. They receive reasonable leave with pay at their university salaries for board meetings and other board business conducted during working hours, and their compensation as university employees is not otherwise altered. You can read a copy of the bill here: [getPDF.asp \(maine.gov\)](#)

**LD 1391: An Act To Enhance the Educational Expertise and Knowledge of the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System, sponsored by Representative Ben Collins**  
This bill adds 6 members to the Board of Trustees of the University of Maine System, 3 who must be current or retired public sector educators, are full voting members and may sit on any board of trustees committee. It requires 3 of the 6 members to be elected by members of Associated Faculties of the Universities of Maine labor union and 3 to be elected by members of the Maine Education Association labor union. All 6 of the members must be confirmed by the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over education and cultural affairs. It requires the 6 members to serve for 5-year terms, except that, of the initial trustees elected by the Associated Faculties of the Universities of Maine, one member must serve for one year, one member must serve for 3 years and one member must serve for 5 years and, of the initial trustees elected by the Maine Education Association, one member must serve for one year, one member must serve for 3 years and

one member must serve for 5 years. You can read a copy of the bill here: [getPDF.asp \(maine.gov\)](#)