

Peter Cummings
Bangor
LD 129

Members of the Committee,

My name is Dr. Peter Cummings. I was born in Millinocket and grew up between Millinocket and Dover Foxcroft. I graduated from John Bapst and UMaine. My family and I have recently move back home to Maine and live in Bangor— after 25 years of being 'away'.

After completing my undergraduate degree it was necessary for me to leave the State in order to pursue advanced degrees. Those degrees involved a Masters degree, a medical degree, a residency and two fellowships, along with 3 board certifications. I spent the last 15 years living in Boston because it's as close I could get to "home". I am not alone. This issue is not unique to aspiring medical students, but science students in general. There are hundreds and hundreds of young people from Maine living around Boston hoping to find a way home. I call this the "brain drain from Maine".

A medical school is different than an osteopathic school. Here in Maine we have UNE, a fantastic education facility. However, osteopathic schools are different, in many ways. MD schools tend to drive industry. Biotech, pharmaceutical, engineering, chemistry, all follow MD schools. There are 38 osteopathic schools in the United States, only 5 of those schools offer advanced degrees. There are over 75 medical schools with advanced degrees. Why are those advanced degrees important? They bring our kids home. In this way, we don't just keep aspiring medical students here, it also brings back other advanced scientists, it gives them jobs, allows them to come home.

This development would also attract younger people from other states to Maine, and in particularly Central and Northern Maine.

The value of this initiative would strengthen the UMaine system and have knockoff effects off also promoting science education in our middle and high school students— who are very far behind the rest of the nation. This bill is about the future of this state. It warrants further study and discussion.

Peter Cummings, MD
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02/2/2023