

Lisa Botshon
University of Maine at Augusta
LD 512

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

My name is Lisa Botshon and I am a professor of English at the University of Maine at Augusta. I am writing to testify in support of LD 512, An Act to Promote Student Enrollment and Degree Completion in the University of Maine System by Providing Tuition Waivers to Eligible Students. I teach a class on Mondays at 1p.m., so I am unable to appear in person. Please know, however, that I am greatly concerned by recent declines in student enrollments in the UMS, some of which are a result of the Free Community College program, a program I fully support. However, because our public higher education system is tuition dependent, even small drops in enrollments can have devastating impact on our universities' financial health, which in turn mean faculty layoffs, program closures, and the like; needless to say, these adversely impact the people of Maine. A progressive program such as Free Community College must be balanced with similar investments in the UMS in order to ensure equilibrium in our educational ecosystem. LD 512 attempts to do just that.