

1656LD —Ought to Pass

An Act to Allow Student Representation Within the Governance of the University of Maine System

Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

April 23, 2023

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, greetings. My name is Michael Delorge and I am a current third-year undergraduate at the University of Maine. I urge you to support LD 1656 to increase the student voice within the University of Maine System Board of Trustees. While I am the current Vice President of the University of Maine Student Government, my views are my own and do not reflect that of any organization or student group at the University.

From my first day at the University of Maine, I have sought to get involved on campus to overcome the isolation presented by COVID-19. I've worked the polls in both national elections held on campus in the past three years, researched the state's substance use epidemic, gotten involved in student government, applied for grants and scholarships, achieved impressive marks in my classes, completed internships, ran a student organization, fostered friendships, made lasting memories, and even found time to sleep a bit. This is a student schedule. Students are superheroes and my peers at the University of Maine are no exception. They are qualified to hold voting roles on the Board of Trustees and have shown impressive leadership, resilience, and dedication to their school when facing barriers such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to their qualifications, students deserve a seat at the table. Currently, having only one student member of the Board of Trustees does not offer enough representation to reflect the diverse set of experiences felt by students from across the University of Maine system — from nursing undergraduates at the University of Fort Kent down to the graduate students at Maine Law in Portland and everywhere in between. Students pay a greater total share to the University of Maine System than the state of Maine, but have no elected representation and no say in how their tuition dollars are spent. Students deserve a vote, a voice, and seat at the table.

I am grateful to be a student at the University of Maine, and I hope that you will support LD 1656 to ensure that students within the University of Maine System have a vote and a voice in administrative decisions.

Sincerely,
Michael Delorge
Saco, ME
University of Maine Class of 2024