

LD 1656—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 Benjamin Doherty 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 Board of Trustees Representative 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.

I have spent my entire college career seeking to better student's lives and campus experiences. I first attended Central Maine Community College and was elected the student body president there. When COVID-19 swept through Maine, I moved the usual on campus activity budget into a food insecurity fund to help students out of work. I transferred to the University of Maine during the pandemic and joined the student government almost immediately. The professionalism of the organization instantly impressed me. Everyday I strive to represent students as part of that organization and I wish I could do more.

The students of the University of Maine system are more than qualified to hold voting roles on the Board of Trustees. They are hard working, forward thinking, and sympathetic to the situations of other students. The current voting student on the Board of Trustees is not enough. Students from the entire system deserve representation, from each campus, including undergraduate and graduate, all across the state. Students now pay a significant portion of the system's operating budget and they deserve a voice in how that money is spent and directed. Students deserve a vote, a voice, and seat at the table.

I am happy that I attend the University of Maine, and I hope that you will support LD 1656 to ensure that all students in the University of Maine System get a voice and a seat at the table.

Sincerely,
Benjamin Doherty
Old Town, ME
University of Maine Class of 2024