



## SCHOOL OF NURSING

2/8/2021

Re: Testimony in support of LD119 “An Act to Increase Faculty in Nursing Education Programs by Amending the Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program”

Husson University School of Nursing is in full support of LD119 Nursing Faculty Loan Repayment program. As a participating school in the statewide effort to increase enrollment in the BSN program, we have increased our enrollment target to 100 students per year in the BSN program based on our clinical, simulation and classroom capacities. The MSN program which prepares nurse practitioners, is seeing growth in enrollment to fill the much needed primary care and psychiatric mental health advanced practice roles. Without a strong team of qualified nurse educators to offer quality BSN and MSN educational programs, fluctuation of enrollment targets may need to be modified and our contribution to increase nurses and advanced practice nurses in Maine may be impaired.

Recruitment for qualified doctorally prepared nursing faculty has become more challenging within the past three years as the competition for faculty nationwide has been significant. We are currently in processing of replacing two full time faculty positions for faculty who are retiring at the end of this spring semester 2021. To date, the search yielded no suitable candidates for Assistant Professor positions, requiring the University to advertise for positions out of the state of Maine and extend our in-state recruitment efforts. Encouraging current faculty who have BSN or MSN degrees to obtain an advanced degree hinges on the ability of the

individual faculty member to create a package of employer contributions, individual contributions, and grant/scholarships to encourage enrollment in doctoral programs. As all doctoral programs specifically in nursing, whether PhD or DNP, are located outside of Maine, costs for enrollment become prohibitive for Maine nurse educators, even if they would like to pursue a doctorate. Coupled with the lack of success of an affordable doctoral nursing program being offered in Maine over the past 15 years (such as potential initiatives through the University of Maine System), doctoral education remains out of reach of many nurse educators in Maine. With the chronic nursing shortage, recruitment to fill nursing faculty positions seems to be stalled and without a strong concerted effort by national, state, and local collaborations to address the shortage in nursing faculty positions, we will not be able to fully prepare the state for ongoing nursing staffing needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer support for this bill. As a Maine based non-profit school of nursing who has a strong commitment to the education of nurses in Maine, we look forward to the passing of this legislation.

Submitted by,



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