

Dear Members of the State and Local Government Committee,

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I am writing to share my personal story in support of **LD 1016: *An Act to Support College Student Participation as Policy Interns for State Legislators*** that would pay students to serve as policy interns for legislators during the legislative session. As someone who has benefited greatly from a policy internship under Representative Osher of Orono, I believe that this program can have a significant positive impact on both the interns and the legislative process.

I first learned about the opportunity to intern for a legislator through a close friend who was a political science major. He spoke highly of her own experiences working for a legislator and encouraged me to consider applying. As someone who had always been interested in politics despite my enrollment in the Business program, I was immediately intrigued.

After doing some research, I contacted the Maine Business School internship coordinator to inquire about receiving course credit for my internship. With his help, I was able to enroll and receive college credit for my internship under Rep. Osher.

During my time as an intern, I've had the opportunity to come to the State House and learn about the legislative process firsthand. I was amazed at the amount of work that went into making policy decisions that affect people's lives and was also able to attend committee hearings, meet with constituents, and provide research and analysis to support Rep. Osher's legislative efforts.

My internship has had a profound impact on me as it has helped me to gain practical experience in government and public policy, while also deepening my understanding of the importance of civic engagement. It also had a positive effect on my college education, as I was able to apply what I had learned in the classroom to real-world situations and extracurricular activities.

I believe that paying students to serve as policy interns for legislators during the legislative session is good for Maine for several reasons. First, it provides young people with valuable opportunities to gain practical experience in government and public policy. This can help to prepare them for future careers in these fields, while also contributing to the development of a skilled and knowledgeable workforce in our state.

In addition, paying students for their work as policy interns can help to address issues of equity and access. Many students who are interested in government and public policy may not be able to afford to take an unpaid internship, and paying them for their work can help to ensure that this opportunity is available to a wider range of students.

Furthermore, having young people involved in the political process can bring new perspectives and ideas to the table. Students who are participating in an internship may be able to provide valuable insights and analysis that can help to inform the legislative process. This can help to ensure that policies are developed in a way that reflects the needs and interests of a diverse range of stakeholders.

Finally, paying students to serve as policy interns can help to improve the quality and effectiveness of the legislative process. By providing support to legislators and their staff, interns can help to ensure that policies are developed in a way that is well-informed and well-researched. This can help to improve the overall quality of legislation and ensure that policies are developed in a way that is evidence-based and effective.

In conclusion, I urge you to support legislation that would pay students to serve as policy interns for legislators during the legislative session. This program can provide valuable experience and opportunities for young people, while also improving the quality and effectiveness of the legislative process. As someone who has personally benefited from this program, I can attest to its value and importance. Thank you for considering this important issue.

Cameron Nelson
Newcastle
LD 1016

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