



DATE: March 18, 2026
TO: Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government
FROM: Sam Warren, UMS Chief External & Governmental Affairs Officer
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RE: **LD 2228, An Act To Eliminate Inactive Boards and Commissions**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government: I write on behalf of the University of Maine System (UMS) to request that the Maine Workforce, Research, Development, and Student Achievement Institute be removed from LD 2228, and also to share information about the State Education and Employment Outcomes Task Force and Higher Education Interpersonal Violence Advisory Commission.

The **Maine Workforce, Research, Development, and Student Achievement Institute** was established in 2021 as a three-year pilot through which world-class UMS researchers would conduct nonpartisan research and evaluation on an ongoing basis regarding programs and policies within the jurisdiction of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Commerce (now Housing and Economic Development), as we did for your Committee in 2024 [regarding Daylight Savings Time](#). This initiative was modeled after a nationally recognized long-standing collaboration between UMS and the Legislature's Education & Cultural Affairs Committee, known as [the Maine Education Policy Research Institute](#) (MEPRI).

This Committee should know that the 131st Legislature voted to make the institute, and thus its advisory steering committee, permanent via [P.L. 2023, Ch. 649](#), though at that time, it did not provide new appropriations to support research activities or appoint members. As the Legislature looks to implement policies and investments that strengthen and grow Maine's economy, UMS is excited for the institute to provide them with state-specific data and analysis to inform decision-making. As a result, **we request that the advisory steering committee not be eliminated** at this time so that we have the opportunity to work with the now-HED Committee to pursue appointments of public, private, and nonprofit sector participants to determine future UMS research activities and also future funding.

The inactive **State Education and Employment Outcomes Task Force** was created to support the development and ongoing operations of Maine Education and Attainment Research Navigation System (EARNs). Administered by the Maine Department of Labor, MaineEARNs links data from our public universities and the Maine Community College System (MCCS) with State employment/wage records. We believe this public tool is

essential to ensuring that education and employment outcomes data are readily available and transparent for students and their families, and that MaineEARNNS will likely become increasingly important in the coming years due to new federal funding opportunities — such as Workforce Pell — that require robust State data resources.

Because of the productive and ongoing collaborations among Maine DOL, UMS, MCCS, and other relevant governmental and private-sector partners — including to support MaineEARNNS — we believe the task force is likely unnecessary, though we defer to Maine DOL and the Committee on its permanent elimination. Regardless of your decision, please know that UMS remains committed to supporting MaineEARNNS and the economic mobility of our students and the state's workforce.

Finally, the **Higher Education Interpersonal Violence Advisory Commission** was created by [P.L. 2021, Ch. 733](#) (originally LD 1727, *An Act Concerning Sexual Misconduct on College Campuses*). While the Commission has never been convened and we defer to the Committee and the Maine Department of Education as to whether it should be permanently eliminated, UMS wants to make clear that we have fulfilled our important obligations under this law. Specifically, to ensure that all members of our campus communities are safe and supported, our System has:

- Annually submitted Clery Reports (federally required Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics) from each UMS university to the Legislature's Education & Cultural Affairs Committee and the Education and Health and Human Services Commissioners;
- Entered into and maintained memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with local sexual assault support centers and domestic violence resource centers, including AMHC Sexual Assault Services, Hope and Justice, Partners for Peace, Rape Response Services, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Services, Sexual Assault Response Services of Southern Maine, and Through These Doors;
- Updated all System and university policies and procedures to align with the law; and
- Established a statewide team of [confidential resource advisors](#) to provide free emergency and ongoing support to our faculty, staff, and students who are impacted by sexual violence, relationship violence, and stalking. Please know we are deeply grateful for the necessary and ongoing State appropriations that support these essential positions.