



MAINE MARITIME ACADEMY

(Pages A-418 and A-419)

Statement of

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President

Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

March 12, 2019

Senators Breen and Millett, Representatives Gattine and Kornfield, and Members of the Joint Committees, Maine Maritime Academy is a small coeducational college located in Downeast Maine. The school was established by act of the Maine Legislature in 1941 and I'm proud to tell you that my Dad graduated in its first class in 1943, followed by two of my uncles.

We are a focused STEM institution offering a very specialized program of study in engineering, management, science and transportation, prescribed by the U.S. Maritime Administration and the U.S. Coast Guard. And Maine Maritime Academy is unique because we are one of only six such state-supported colleges in the country that offer this specialized program of study. We have an enrollment of about 1000 students, more than 70 percent of whom are residents of the state of Maine and approximately 60 percent of whom are in a regimental program of study. Nearly 40 percent of the students that make up the Class of 2022 are the first in their family to attend college; 66 percent of those students are from Maine.

Given the nature of our specialized form of education, the majority of our students are in a compulsory drug-testing program due the requirement of the license they seek upon successful completion of their studies. Our students are focused and driven and, in many respects, that helps define us and set us apart from many other colleges.

Maine Maritime Academy is an important, but often overlooked, aspect of the state's higher education system. We are unique in that we are career-oriented, providing a quality career-tracked education to the young men and women throughout our state and preparing them to be successful in their careers and hopefully in their lives. As the term STEM has become more

widely recognized within the higher education discussion, guiding present and future higher education standards, Maine Maritime Academy has come to the forefront as a premier STEM institution providing our graduates with the fundamental tools necessary for successful careers within our state and beyond.

At its founding, the college's operational expenses were covered completely by the state and federal governments, and the state paid for the construction and maintenance of our facilities. Over time, that relationship has changed such that the federal contribution is primarily in relation to the 500-foot training vessel *State of Maine* that we operate in a custodial arrangement with the Federal Maritime Administration.

The state's contribution to our operating expenses has declined over time from as much as 50 percent of the total 20 years ago, to less than a quarter of our budget now. While I recognize that significant increases in our base budget are unreasonable, I have typically sought additional one-time funding to address aging infrastructure on our campus. Typically, our appropriation requests have reflected three realities: the ever-increasing cost of people, the ever-increasing cost of utilities, and the ever-increasing cost of maintaining our buildings. While my approach to this budget cycle was similar, I was not successful in receiving any support for infrastructure maintenance. Renovation and maintenance of several state-owned buildings that are more than 100 years old is a significant cost borne on the backs of tuition-paying students and their hardworking parents. I believe it is time for the state to address the question of how we are to maintain the state's higher education infrastructure, and I am pleased to learn that legislation to this effect will soon be introduced.

To some, the kind of requests I have made in the past have seemed mundane and modest, but they are critical to our effective and efficient operation. We at the Academy--the faculty, staff and students--are appreciative of your efforts to help us address some of the obstacles we confront. I'm a realist and I know that there are spending priorities. I just hope I can get what I need to maintain the property for which our Board of Trustees have been entrusted responsibility. There is no doubt that much work and commitment is necessary to address the fundamental challenges that you and I share in meeting the higher education needs of Maine students so that they can be as successful as possible in their academic pursuits, in their careers, and in their lives. Maine Maritime Academy and I stand ready to be of valuable service to you and the people of Maine.