The 128th Legislature of the State of Maine
State House
Augusta, ME

Dear Honorable Members of the 128th Legislature:

Under the authority vested in me by Article IV, Part Third, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Maine, I am hereby vetoing LD 1404, “An Act To Ensure the Integrity of For-Profit Colleges.”

Among its many problems, this bill seeks to dramatically expand the authority and increase the workload of the Maine State Board of Education. I understand the State Board was not consulted during the consideration of this bill, nor does the bill provide the State Board with resources to carry out these new responsibilities.

This bill proposes that certain universities be treated differently for the purposes of authorizing or de-authorizing the granting of degrees. I believe the state should have one standard that is applied consistently to higher education institutions that operate in Maine.

As presented in this bill, I question whether existing not-for-profit, post-secondary institutions in Maine could meet the 50 percent threshold imposed in the bill. It is hard to determine, especially since the bill does not provide definitions that would allow this bill to be implemented fairly and consistently.

I find it interesting this bill seeks to equate the percentage of dollars spent on instruction with “adequate educational standards” at for-profit schools. Throughout this session, members of the legislature have rejected my argument for increasing the percentage of education dollars in the classroom for public K-12 education, yet they are happy to impose new restrictions on a subset of higher education institutions. While I am not surprised legislators engage in this kind of hypocrisy, I will not be a party to it.

I object to this unfunded mandate that creates inconsistent, undefined standards for rescinding degree-granting abilities at certain universities in Maine. Therefore, I return LD 1404 unsigned and vetoed. I urge the legislature to sustain it.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Paul R. LePage
Governor