

The Maine Association of Financial Aid Administrators (MASFAA) held the first "Town Hall/Financial Aid Administrators' Bill of Rights" event, the first of its kind in the country, with a focus on improving the communication between Financial Aid Administrators (FAAs) and the Department of Education. The event was held at Saint Joseph's College in Windham, Maine on October 18, 2024.

MASFAA was joined by Allison Feikes who is the Senior Legislative Assistant to Senator Susan Collins, Jill Desjean who is the Senior Policy Analyst at the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), Gena Boling, Vice President for the Eastern Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (EASFAA) and the Associate Vice Provost for Enrollment at Cornell University, and Jamie Santiago, President of MASFAA and the Director of Financial Aid at University of Maine Augusta. 39 members from Maine's 28 colleges and universities were in attendance along with partners from the Finance Authority of Maine, SOFI Loans and other guests. All Representatives and Senators who sit on the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee were invited to this event.

The highlight of this meeting was to address the numerous issues that students, families and FAAs encountered with the launch of the new Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the 2024/2025 academic year and share how this affected Mainers. The primary focus of this endeavor was on moving forward and developing an "FAA Bill of Rights" with the goal of a better 2025/2026 FAFSA launch, as well as reestablishing a partnership of trust between FAAs and The Department of Education. We are grateful for the opportunity to work alongside national stakeholders to discuss ways of improving such critical systems, and we look forward to future collaborative opportunities.

MASFAA would like to thank everybody who attended and a special thank you to Gritty's (Portland), KeyBank (Portland), Machias Savings Bank (Portland), Pat's Meat Market (Portland), Saint Joseph's College and Staples (Windham) for the generous donations that helped make the event a success.

