



**LD 258 An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025**

**Testimony – Finance Authority of Maine  
February 15, 2023**

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs and members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, Senator Curry, Representative Roberts and members of the Committee On Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business my name is Natalie Trombley. I am a registered nurse and President of the Organization of Maine Nursing Leadership (OMNL) presenting our comments on the Governor's budget. OMNL represents nursing leaders from patient to policy. It is a professional organization that directs the course for nursing by promoting sound healthcare policies within our organizations and at the local, state, and national level. Towards this Mission, OMNL creates an environment that encourages collaborative partnerships.

OMNL recognizes that addressing the nursing shortage is multifaceted, starting with the supply of eligible candidates interested in joining a profession that is continually recognized as the most respected. We support the Health Professions Loan Repayment Pilot Program knowing that many nurses applied and received loan support funding. We are in full support of the Governor's proposal to provide FAME with an additional \$4 million dollars for the loan repayment program.

OMNL members are also supporting the needs of Maine's nursing education programs with support for faculty and clinical preceptorships providing hands on clinical education for nursing students. Our members also support new nursing graduates as they begin professional practice in Maine's hospitals and health care settings.

OMNL joined Maine's nursing organizations and faculty in supporting funding for the Nurse Educator Loan Repayment Program during the 130<sup>th</sup> Legislature. The \$1 million dollars in original funding was quickly allocated by FAME in the initial round of applications during the late summer of 2022. Funds will support 12 masters prepared nurses and 12 doctoral prepared nurses to pay off advanced education debt with a commitment to teach for 3 years in a Maine based nursing education program. This is significant progress in addressing the faculty needs of our nursing programs. The funds were allocated as one-time funding that is now nearly fully spent. **We ask that the committee's include \$1 million dollars in the biennial budget to provide ongoing funds to sustain the nursing education loan repayment program into future years.** The addition funds will not be time limited and provide flexibility to support nurse educator loan funding for future faculty needs as older faculty retire over time.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the need to support loan repayment for nurses and nursing faculty.