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***Testimony of Rep. Jane Pringle in opposition to  
LD 1639, An Act to Address Unsafe Staffing of Nurses and Improve Patient  
Care  
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing***

Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and members of the Labor and Housing Committee, my name is Representative Jane Pringle and I live in Windham. I am submitting this testimony in opposition to LD 1639.

My career before becoming a legislator was as a primary care physician, Director of outpatient clinics at Maine Medical Center and as an Associate Medicine Residency Program Director.

I do understand the need to manage staffing ratios in healthcare. I understand that hospitals already have ideal ratios which they work to achieve. I also understand the need for flexibility when we are taking care of patients.

In all healthcare teams in which I have worked we have sometimes had to “cover” for a colleague who became sick or had an emergency. As a manager I also had to work to find coverage for staff with emergencies. It would be good if we always had back up resources to fill in, but that is not always possible. Patient care is not like most businesses which can close or reduce services.

Thank you for your consideration.