

Hello, I am writing in support of bill LD 703, “An Act to Establish a Health Care Gap Year Program for Recent College Graduates.”

I have been very fortunate to have spent this past year as a participant in the Roux Center’s Post-Baccalaureate Pre-Clinical Gap Year Program, which helps to connect recent college graduates who are planning to pursue further education in the medical field with an entry-level clinical position in Maine during a gap year. I am originally from Iowa but I fell in love with the state of Maine during my four years as a student at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine. Ahead of my graduation in May 2024, I knew I wanted to find a job that would allow me to work with a wide variety of patients, to help me determine whether a clinical job was something I could see myself doing for the rest of my life. My pre-health advisor at Bowdoin recommended the Roux Center’s program to me, and it was a perfect fit. The Roux Center connected me to my current job as a Medical Assistant at Greater Portland Health. In my job, I get to work with patients everyday, which—thankfully—I discovered is something I really enjoy. Not only has the Gap-Year program allowed me to stay in Maine, but it also provides a monthly housing stipend, which has eased some of the financial burden from accepting a low-wage, entry-level position.

In my job, I have discovered a passion for primary care through watching the physicians and nurses at Greater Portland Health and the trust that they have built over time with their patients. Additionally, I have learned what it means to work at an FQHC and assist in the treatment of patients who are new Mainers, unhoused, and/or uninsured. I have seen the impact that compassionate care can have on the patient experience. I have also benefited from working in the smaller clinic environment. Everyday, I work with providers who invite me to be curious and ask questions about their jobs, which has confirmed my desire to pursue a career as a family physician.

My gap-year experience has undoubtedly left a lasting impact on my career interests and ambitions. I feel extremely lucky that the Roux Center gave me this opportunity. Bill LD 703 would allow more recent college graduates to have this life-changing experience, which is why I would like to extend my support for the bill.