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March 13, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Chair
Representative Meyer, Chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 541 – *An Act to Promote Awareness of the Maine Parentage Act*

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, thank you for the opportunity to provide information *in opposition* to LD 541, *An Act to Promote Awareness of the Maine Parentage Act*.

This bill requires Maine CDC to develop and distribute an informational brochure that addresses basic questions about the Maine Parentage Act. This brochure is meant to be widely distributed to physician offices, hospitals and other public places. The estimated cost for printing brochures is \$16,000, with additional costs for distribution.

Title 19-A chapter 61, *Maine Parentage Act* (Act), is comprehensive, covering various aspects of *parentage*¹. Maine CDC appreciates the intent of this bill; however, there are existing systems to achieve the objective. Currently, information is available online on the Maine CDC Data, Research, and Vital Statistics (DRVS) office webpage, and this resource can be updated to include additional information. The acknowledgement or denial of parentage is administrative processes, though other sections of the Act, such as gestational carriers and de facto parentage, require adjudication, are outside of Maine CDC's scope of work, and may not be appropriate as part of the Department's online material. Additionally, information addressing frequently asked questions on the Act is being updated at this time to be posted on DRVS's website and be available for the public. (See attachment)

Widespread distribution of written material is not a cost-efficient way to disseminate information. Printed materials may become outdated leading to erroneous or conflicting information in print. There is also no way to assure that the information is getting to the intended target population. Maine municipalities and birthing hospitals have access to the Department's online brochures and DRVS forms and instructions and are notified when information is created or updated to ensure that outdated documentation is replaced. Updated information is publicly available for print and provided to individuals at their request.

¹ The Maine Parentage Act establishes eight main mechanisms for establishing parentage – birth, adoption, acknowledgement, presumption, de facto parentage, genetic parentage, assisted reproduction, and gestational-carrier agreements. 19-A MRS § 1832(14) defines '*parentage*' to mean the legal relationship between a child and a parent as established in accordance with the Act.

Maine CDC opposes this legislation requiring the Department to distribute printed material specific to the Maine Parentage Act. Information available electronically that can be accessed and printed as needed and in response to individual requests is more practical, cost-effective and in line with other education and outreach efforts. LD 541 may not be necessary as the work described in the legislation is currently being undertaken; and DRVS is open to working with the Sponsor and the Committee to add the desired level of detail to this material for its public-facing website.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions during your deliberation of this bill.

Sincerely,



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Director
Maine Center for Disease Control
Maine Department of Health and Human Services

Enc. Maine Parentage Act: Frequently Asked Questions (2025)