

Testimony of Coralie Giles, RN  
President, Maine State Nurses Association  
Vice-President, National Nurses United

**IN SUPPORT OF LD 1125**

**“An Act to Amend the Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program”**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs  
Hearing: April 14, 2025 at 11:00 a.m.

Dear Chair Rafferty, Chair Murphy, and distinguished members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

On behalf of more than 4,000 registered nurses and health care professionals providing patient care in our state, the **Maine State Nurses Association/National Nurses Organizing Committee/National Nurses United (MSNA)** urges the Committee to support LD 1125, “An Act to Amend the Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program.”

Support for nursing faculty is critical to educating the next generation of nurses. However, for prospective nursing faculty, moving to teaching can mean taking a pay cut.<sup>1</sup> Nurses with significant student debt may not be able to afford to become nursing faculty. The existing loan repayment program authorizes payment of loans for master’s and doctoral degrees. LD 1125 would also allow payment of debt for associate and bachelor’s degrees for the same current or prospective nursing faculty members.

LD 1125 would be an important improvement because debt from undergraduate degrees can make it more difficult for nurses to pursue additional education and accept faculty positions. While associate degrees are a critical and often affordable entry-point

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<sup>1</sup> The Bureau of Labor Statistics’ Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics Query System shows an annual mean wage of \$87,440 for registered nurses in May 2024, <https://data.bls.gov/oes/#/geoOcc/Multiple%20occupations%20for%20one%20geographical%20area>. “The State of the State’s Nursing Education Programs 2022 Survey Results” by Susan B Sepples PhD, University of Southern Maine, shows an average beginning salary for full-time faculty in Maine’s nursing programs in 2022 of \$58,477 for faculty with master’s degrees and \$67,200 for faculty with doctoral degrees. <https://usm.maine.edu/school-nursing/wp-content/uploads/sites/193/2023/09/Maine-Nursing-Survey-Results-2022.pdf>.

into the profession, nurses who pursue the advanced degrees necessary for nursing faculty positions can end up with compounding student debt. Extending the existing loan repayment program to pay debt from all the required education would be a positive step to recruiting nurse faculty.

**We urge the Committee to support LD 1125.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Coralie Giles RN".

Coralie (Cokie) Giles, RN  
President, Maine State Nurses Association  
Vice-President, National Nurses United