

I am please to have the opportunity to address the committee today. My name is Emily Wright and I am a registered nurse who works in labor and delivery and I am a resident of the town of Bar Harbor. I am writing today in support of LD 1523. I had the privilege of working as a birth doula for five years before becoming a registered nurse in labor and delivery and therefore I have unique perspective of the role that doula's provide for the laboring person both in the role of the doula and in that of the labor and delivery staff at a local hospital. I can say from my personal experience supporting laboring individuals from the Downeast area that the services provided by a trained doula are invaluable both to the individual receiving care as well as to the hospital staff that are often overburdened by the responsibilities of charting, medicating, operating equipment and notifying other care team personnel to the point that we can not always be the constant and consistent presence a laboring individual needs. The education and support provided by a doula helps laboring individuals feel more empowered and supported in their experience while also increasing positive birth outcomes for both laboring individual and infant. These are things that every individual deserves, not just those in the financial position to pay out of pocket for services. It saddens me greatly to report that Bar Harbor will soon be joining the 50% of rural areas that no longer offer maternity services and it is my strong belief that the services of doulas are needed now more than ever to help individuals navigate what are becoming more sparse and less available prenatal, birthing and postnatal care choices. Thank you for this opportunity to share my perspective with the committee. I ask that you please vote "ought to pass" on LD1523 today.

Sincerely,  
Emily Wright RN