

Susan Doughty  
Scarborough  
LD 961

Dear Chairman Bailey, Chairman Gramlich and Members of the Committee: As a Nurse Practitioner for the past 35 years, a former owner of New England WomenCenter in South Portland, Maine, and adjunct faculty for Simmons University NP program, I want to support LD961, An Act to Address Maine's Health Care Workforce Shortage and Improve Access to Care. I can attest to the standards expected of Nurse Practitioners upon graduating and passing national certification exams. The safety and quality of nurse practitioner (NP) competency-based education has consistently been demonstrated through more than 50 years of research. This regulation bottlenecks our Maine workforce development, hinders our ability to attract Nurse Practitioners to our state, and needlessly restricts the number of Nurse Practitioners who would otherwise evaluate, diagnose and treat patients. There is evidence to support that longer timeframes to licensure will be detrimental to improving access, especially in rural and underserved areas: Clinicians of all health disciplines are more likely to work in rural and underserved areas if they start working in these areas earlier in their careers. All supervisory restrictions were lifted in March of 2020 as part of the Emergency COVID legislation. It was recognized that this supervisory period was a barrier to access to care when the pandemic began and it remains a barrier to access to care today. Nurse practitioners have demonstrated that they are safe, effective and competent health care providers before, during and after the pandemic. Please vote in favor of LD 961 for the citizens of Maine.

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