

Mollie Barnathan  
Portland  
LD 1523

April 17th, 2025

Dear Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Honorable Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Mollie Barnathan, I am a resident of Portland and I am submitting this testimony in support of L.D. 1523 An Act to Improve Perinatal Care Through Expanded Access to Doula Services. I am a certified postpartum doula and the co-founder of North Light Newborns. I have a Masters in Public Health with a background in global health and community development. I'm also the proud - and very busy - mom of three young girls.

For eight years, I've had the honor and privilege of helping parents navigate one of the most fragile, joyful and terrifying times of their lives. I was drawn to this work because of my own harrowing experience with postpartum depression and OCD. When my husband returned to work after my first daughter was born, I struggled with lack of sleep, breastfeeding and social isolation. Paralyzed by panic and thoughts of self-harm, I begged for support. Thankfully, we had the means to get me that support and we all got through it together.

Because doula care is not currently covered under insurance, this care is inaccessible to most. Many families don't have the resources or ability to get support for postpartum challenges, whether it's a severe case of postpartum depression like mine or something as simple as making sure everyone is getting nutritious food and staying healthy.

Improving consistent access to and affordability of high-quality perinatal care is critical to addressing Maine's perinatal health crisis. Doulas are key care workers who are an evidence-based intervention that positively impacts birth experiences and postpartum outcomes. L.D. 1523 would provide life-changing support for families at a critical juncture in their lives.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I hope you will vote "Ought to Pass" on L.D. 1523.

Thank you,  
Mollie Barnathan, MPH  
Certified Postpartum Doula