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### Public Testimony

#### LD 1523 An Act to Improve Perinatal Care Through Expanded Access to Doula Services

My name is Aspen Ruhlin, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Mabel Wadsworth Center. First, I would like to thank the Chairs Senator Ingwersen and Representative Meyer, along with the rest of the Health and Human Services Committee. Mabel Wadsworth Center is a sexual and reproductive health center that has been providing care in Bangor since 1984. One of the many services we are honored to provide our community is prenatal care. As experts in reproductive care and their impact on health outcomes, we urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 1523.

When someone giving birth is able to have a doula providing care and support, we see improved health outcomes and increases to that birthing person's autonomy<sup>1</sup>. This is particularly true when it comes to those who have been marginalized by the medical field, such as Black women and those who are low-income. The services doulas provide are essential, whether we are talking about emotional support, advocating for birthing people, or helping birthing folks understand medical terminology and procedures.

In order for doulas to provide these services, they need to be compensated, just like any other job. MaineCare coverage of doula services is essential to improve perinatal care for Mainers. As providers who care deeply for pregnant and birthing people, we at Mabel Wadsworth Center urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 1523.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3647727/>