

Jay Davis  
Belfast, Maine  
LD 1578

May 6, 2025

Greetings Chair Bailey, Chair Mathieson and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee. My name is Jay Davis and I live in Belfast. I am a retired journalist, though reporters never retire as our curiosity keeps us searching for life's truths. One truth I'm noticing is that health care has been taken over by big-money entities that put the bottom line, and not patients, first.

Rep. Dodge's bill, LD 1578, is a big step in the right direction to tame that dispiriting development. Since Maine Health took over our hospital more than a decade ago, I have watched positions and resources taken from Belfast and transplanted to PenBay Hospital in Rockland or to Maine Health itself. Public meetings have been held to decry these movements, all of which have been well-attended and loud in their opposition. Medical staffers, patients, city officials and many others have testified. But nothing changes.

LD 1578 adds another deliberative body to these decisions that represents at least a possibility that local voices will be heard and, perhaps, supported. Our hospital is 121 years old this year and has been a bellwether for the community always.

The recent decision by Maine Health to end the hospital's birth and delivery service has been explained by MH officers in vague and uncharitable terms — "We can't find a full-time obstetrician" for Belfast, PenBay "isn't that far away" and "we will still provide pre-natal services there." Having DHHS available to make an intelligent and clear decision when yet another loss of service is put before us would be a godsend.

These are difficult times, for sure. But they are made worse when it is the corporate bottom-line that matters and not the community and its patients. Please vote Yes on LD 1578 and return the human element to Maine's health care.

Thank you.

Jay Davis  
Belfast