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May 7, 2025

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Emily Wright and I am a resident of the town of Bar Harbor. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today to share my support of LD 1972.

I work as a labor and delivery nurse at MDI Hospital in Bar Harbor and as you are all aware our town has been recently rocked by the devastating news that our hospital administration and board have decided to close our OB unit effective July 1st, ripping away essential services from vulnerable members of our community and leaving our island, our outer islands and surrounding area families with little access and choice for birthing services. This situation unfortunately is not unique to our town. Maine is experiencing a rash of closures leaving families stranded and without the care they need. This is not a sustainable model of healthcare. How can we keep our communities safe without essential services? How can we build up and sustain our communities if there is no where for entire populations of people to receive the care they need? We can not.

LD 1972 would help to bring transparency and accountability into the decision making process for future closures, of, not only obstetrics departments, but any and all services that communities come to depend on and utilize for their health, well being, safety and sustainability.

While it is understood that LD 1972 would not entirely alleviate all closures, it would help to bring a more objective view into the process of making the very grave decision to cancel a service and hopefully help to maintain the basic human right of essential healthcare

services. It would invite healthcare organizations to slow down and listen to what local communities are needing and asking for, while inviting organizations to work with the state in a more transparent way to problem solve in ways they may previously have been unable or unwilling to in order to maintain these services.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to pass LD 1972 for the safety of our Maine communities and the sustainability of our future generations.