

Ellen DaCorte

Somesville, Maine

May 20, 2025

Dear Representatives Zager, Foley, Morris, Cluchey, and Boyer, and Honorable Members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services:

My name is Ellen DaCorte, and I am writing in support of LD 1972 and the efforts to integrate the concerns of LD 1578 into this legislation. I enjoyed listening to the discussion during the May 15th working session for LD 1578. It is clear to me that you are committed to finding a workable solution to this complex issue related to health service closures, especially obstetrical units- which has left many Maine communities without access to timely, essential maternal care.

As you consider LD 1972 and the concerns raised in LD 1578, I ask that you also review the two testimonies I previously submitted for LD 1578. My concerns remain the same: when a facility chooses to eliminate a critical health service—especially something as vital as OB care in rural areas—it is essential to have a thorough review process that involves the expertise of the Department of Health and Human Services. Protecting public safety requires collaboration, and we must work together as a team to achieve that goal.

DHHS is best positioned to evaluate the public health and safety impacts of these decisions and to help identify mitigation strategies when services are in jeopardy. Rural communities and hospitals need support, and DHHS involvement can help ensure that these decisions are part of a coordinated, thoughtful process. This will help ensure that the needs of rural patients are met with the safest care possible, while also promoting transparency.

Thank you again for your dedication to this issue and for considering my testimony.

Respectfully,

Ellen DaCorte, RN