

Anne Marie van Hengel  
portland  
LD 1972

Chairpersons and honorable members of the Committee, I am writing today as an advocate for improved perinatal outcomes in Maine. I previously submitted testimony in support of LD 1578, “An Act to Require the Department of Health and Human Services to Review Disruption to or Removal of Health Services.” I was recently informed that the discussion of LD 1578 is being rolled into the broader consideration of LD 1972, and I respectfully ask that my prior testimony be considered as part of this hearing. LD 1578 addressed a crucial gap in communication and continuity of care during hospital or practice closures—especially those affecting obstetric and perinatal services. I have seen firsthand how disruptive these closures can be for pregnant individuals and families, particularly in regions already underserved by maternal health providers. I have great respect for Representative Zager and the intent behind LD 1972. That said, I find the bill quite complex and far-reaching. I am still working to fully understand its implications and may not yet have a comprehensive opinion on all of its provisions. I hope that the urgent concerns raised in LD 1578—especially the need for clear patient communication, continuity of care planning, and accountability in perinatal service transitions—remain a key part of your deliberations. Thank you for your time and for your commitment to protecting access to essential healthcare services in Maine. Respectfully submitted, Anne Marie van Hengel, MD, FACOG Perinatal Health Advocate