

jason goodrich
Brewer
LD 1990

I write in strong support of this bill.

At its core, this legislation corrects a flaw in current law that prevents the State Board of Examiners of Psychologists from licensing a qualified professional who has already passed the required examination—solely because that person failed it once within the prior six months.

That is not a public safety measure. It is a procedural delay with no clinical value. Maine is facing a well-documented behavioral health workforce shortage. The consequences are visible across the state: long waitlists, delayed care, emergency departments carrying what should be outpatient needs, and families struggling to find timely support. Yet under current law, even when an applicant has met every substantive requirement for licensure, the Board is required to wait.

This bill removes that unnecessary barrier. It allows the Board to act when competence has been demonstrated—no sooner, no later.

Importantly, this legislation does not lower standards. All existing safeguards remain fully intact. Applicants must still hold a doctoral degree from an accredited or board-approved program, complete qualifying professional experience, pass the required examinations, demonstrate ethical fitness and competence, and meet Maine's training requirements related to family and intimate partner violence. The only change is the removal of an arbitrary waiting period that serves no protective purpose once an examination has been successfully passed.

The impact of this delay is especially clear in rural Maine. Aroostook County—larger than the state of Connecticut by land area—has a very limited number of practicing psychologists serving a population of roughly 67,000 people. Access is already constrained by geography, travel distance, and provider availability. When qualified clinicians are ready to practice, laws that force them to sit idle only deepen existing gaps in care.

Examinations are important tools, but they are not moral judgments. Competent professionals sometimes fail, regroup, retake, and pass. When they do pass, the public interest is served by allowing them to practice—not by making them wait out a clock that has nothing to do with patient safety.

This bill restores common sense. It respects professional rigor while allowing the licensing board to do what it was created to do: license qualified psychologists without unnecessary delay, especially during a workforce shortage.

In moments like this, tradition alone is not a reason to maintain a rule. When the ladder is sound, you climb it.

I respectfully urge the Committee to vote Ought to Pass.

Thank you for your time and consideration.