

Ketsia Kabela
Saco
LD 2074

Testimony of Ketsia Kabela

Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee

LD 2074 – HP 1387: An Act to Update the Requirements for Social Worker
Licensure

January 27, 2026

Representative Mastraccio and Honorable Members of the Health Coverage,
Insurance and Financial Services Committee,

My name is Ketsia Kabela. I am a resident of Saco, Maine, and I am currently employed with the State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services in Child Protective Services (CPS). I am here today to express my strong support for LD 2074, An Act to Update the Requirements for Social Worker Licensure.

This bill is critically important to me and to many others who want to serve the citizens of Maine as social workers. I have been employed by the State of Maine for one year and have had the privilege of working closely with children and families. However, my current position has limitations, and I want to be able to offer more direct support and responsibility in serving vulnerable populations.

I hold a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and have extensive experience in child welfare. Prior to working in Maine, I served as a case manager for unaccompanied minors in the state of Colorado. Despite my education and professional experience, I am currently unable to work as a CPS caseworker in Maine solely due to the title of my degree.

I was informed that I could apply for a conditional social worker license. Before submitting my application, I was advised by a Department employee that I needed to complete additional coursework to be eligible. While working full-time and often overtime I enrolled in and successfully completed several social science courses online through York County Community College. I earned strong grades and paid all related expenses out of pocket. I followed this guidance in good faith, believing I was meeting the licensure requirements.

Two months after submitting my application, I was informed that the Board does not accept coursework taken outside of an earned degree. This decision was both surprising and disappointing, particularly because the staff member who guided me through the process was also unaware of this policy. When rules or policies change, it is only fair that both applicants and staff are clearly informed. In this case, the lack of communication resulted in confusion and unnecessary financial burden.

Additionally, there are employees within the Department who hold Political Science degrees with similar coursework who were approved for conditional licensure and are currently working as caseworkers. This inconsistency makes the denial of my application feel inequitable.

I strongly believe that the passage of LD 2074 will create a clearer, fairer pathway for qualified individuals to serve children and families in the State of Maine. This bill would allow dedicated professionals like myself to continue serving our communities more fully and effectively.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Ketsia Kabela