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Public Testimony

LD 1206: An Act to Prohibit the Disclosure of Nonpublic Records Without Proper Judicial Review

My name is Aspen Ruhlin, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Mabel Wadsworth Center. First, I would like to thank the chairs Senator Carney and Representative Kuhn, along with the rest of the Judiciary Committee for reading this testimony. I would also like to thank Representative Sato for sponsoring this bill, and all of the cosponsors for cosponsoring. Mabel Wadsworth Center is a private, independent, feminist sexual and reproductive health center that has been providing care in Bangor for over four decades. Given our role in providing essential, compassionate healthcare to our community, we have a deep understanding of the importance of everyone having access to care without fear or barriers. For this reason, we are asking you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 1206.

It is not controversial to say that people should be able to access medical care without fear of harassment or detainment by federal agents. Healthcare is a basic need for all members of our community, regardless of where they were born or the color of their skin. As a private health center, those seeking care with Mabel Wadsworth Center are afforded the safety everyone deserves when accessing care. We strongly believe that those getting care at public hospitals deserve this same safety, which has been the standard recognized by politicians regardless of party affiliation for years.

Along with the fact that people simply deserve access to healthcare without barriers and fear, this is a public health issue. When individuals can not safely access healthcare, the health of the entire community suffers. Let us be clear—there is no shame in a person contracting an illness, whether that is strep or a sexually transmitted infection (STI). Humans are remarkably skilled at getting sick. What we do know is that when individuals can not access testing and treatment for infections, their own health and the health of their communities

suffer. This is also true for cancer screenings, annual checkups, and any other care someone may need.

The reality is that ICE agents are engaging in a campaign of terror against immigrants, regardless of legal status; Black people; Indigenous people; and other people of color. The Supreme Court of the United States ruled, unjustly, that ICE agents may use racial profiling as an excuse to harass civilians¹. Given these factors and the removal of protection from ICE harassment at designated “sensitive locations” like schools and hospitals on a federal level, this legislation is essential to keep our communities safe and healthy. We at Mabel Wadsworth Center strongly urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 1206.

¹ https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/24pdf/25a169_5h25.pdf