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To: The Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

From: Ryan Salamon, DMD

Date: February 23, 2026

Position: Ought Not to Pass

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and distinguished members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services:

My name is Ryan Salamon, and I am a practicing dentist in Manchester, Maine. I am writing today to testify in strong opposition to **LD 2206**. While the intent of this bill is to address the dental workforce shortage in our state, the proposed "associate dentist" pathway creates a sub-standard tier of licensure that threatens patient safety, fails to resolve the geographic maldistribution of care, and disproportionately benefits corporate dental entities at the expense of Maine's independent practices.

The False Promise of Improved Access

Increasing the sheer number of dental licenses in Maine does not solve the access-to-care crisis. Our state's primary challenge is not a lack of providers, but a lack of providers in the rural areas that need them most. LD 2206 does not require these "associate dentists" to practice in underserved regions or accept MaineCare. Consequently, new licensees are likely to be recruited by large-scale offices in urban centers where profitability is higher. We are essentially diluting the standards of our profession without ensuring a single additional appointment for a child or senior in rural Maine.

Compromising Patient Safety and Standard of Care

The hallmark of American dentistry is the rigorous, standardized education provided by CODA-accredited institutions. LD 2206 seeks to replace years of doctoral-level clinical and ethical training with a six-year "supervision" period. General supervision in a private office is inherently subjective and lacks the comprehensive oversight of an academic faculty. By allowing an alternative pathway for those who have not met the educational equivalency of a U.S. doctoral degree, we are creating a two-tiered system of care. Maine citizens deserve a dentist who has met the same high national standards, regardless of where that dentist was born or trained.

Corporate Monopoly and the Erosion of Local Practice

Finally, this bill provides a distinct competitive advantage to Corporate Dental Service Organizations (DSOs). These entities have the legal and financial infrastructure to sponsor and house associate dentists under this 6-year program, using them as a lower-cost labor force to expand their footprint. Small, solo practitioners cannot compete on sheer numbers with this corporate model. This bill will ultimately lead to the further consolidation of Maine's dental market, hollowing out the private practices that provide the most personalized and continuous care to our residents.

For these reasons, I urge the committee to vote **"Ought Not to Pass"** on LD 2206.

Respectfully submitted,

Ryan Salamon, DMD

Lakeside Dental