

Testimony of Dr. Katelyn Pierson, DMD

LD 2206

An Act to Establish an Alternative Pathway to Dental Licensure

In Opposition

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and Distinguished Members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee:

My name is Dr. Katelyn Pierson, and I am a general dentist practicing in Biddeford, Maine. I have lived in Maine since 1998, grew up in Saco, and earned my dental degree from the University of New England College of Dental Medicine with the intention of serving the communities that shaped me.

We all recognize that access to dental care is a serious issue in Maine. However, Maine has a distribution problem—not a shortage of dentists overall. In recent years, we have added many new dentists to our workforce. The challenge is not simply the number of providers, but where care is delivered and how patients are able to access it.

LD 2206 attempts to address access by lowering licensure standards and creating a new pathway to practice. While well-intentioned, this approach raises serious concerns.

First, patient safety requires consistent standards. Dentistry is healthcare. It often involves surgery, prescribing medications, diagnosing infections, and managing emergencies. Licensure standards exist to ensure patients are treated by professionals who have completed rigorous, nationally accredited education and clinical training. Creating a new category of dentist with different educational requirements risks uneven quality of care and confusion for patients.

Second, supervision is not a substitute for education. General supervision and written practice agreements cannot replace comprehensive CODA-accredited training. A supervising dentist cannot be present for every clinical judgment, complication, or emergency. If something goes wrong, the patient is harmed immediately—regardless of who is technically supervising.

Third, this bill creates a two-tiered system of care. A separate license category inevitably results in different standards. Vulnerable populations—MaineCare patients, rural Mainers, and children—are most likely to receive care under this alternative pathway. Maine should not create one standard of dentistry for those with resources and another for those without.

Maine already has pathways for internationally trained dentists to become licensed when they demonstrate educational equivalency. If we want to recruit more providers, the true barriers are reimbursement rates, practice sustainability, and geographic challenges—not a lack of licensure options.

Patients deserve clarity about who is treating them and what training that provider has. Multiple tiers of licensure undermine public trust in both the profession and the state's regulatory system.

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Katelyn Pierson, DMD