

Rosalind Revilock-Frost  
Christian Science  
LD 2233

Written Testimony of Christian Science Committee on Publication for Maine  
Concerning LD 2233 / HP 1509

Chairs Bailey and Mathieson, and members of the Committee on Health Coverage,  
Insurance and Financial Services:

As the designated representative of Christian Science in the state of Maine, please accept this written testimony concerning LD 2233 / HP 1509: MAINE BOARD OF MEDICINE MEDICAL PRACTICE ACT (“MPA”) “An Act to Combine the Board of Licensure in Medicine and Board of Osteopathic Licensure into a Single Licensing Board for All Physicians and Physician Associates.”

I first want to express that we respect the work that has been done to combine both Boards in the MPA, and to specifically call out what type of medical care should be licensed. However, the MPA also repeals 32 M.R.S.A. § 3270, which makes clear that religious practice of healing through prayer would not require a medical license. We ask that this clarifying language be included in the MPA as well.

We have communicated with Tim Terranova, Executive Director of Maine Board of Licensure In Medicine, he does not think the omission was intentional and encouraged us to submit comments to the Committee pointing out the omission and asking that it be reinserted.

To this end, we ask the Committee to consider including in the MPA the current religious accommodation found in 32 M.R.S.A. § 3270: “Nothing in this chapter may be construed as to affect or prevent the practice of the religious tenets of a church in the ministrations to the sick or suffering by mental or spiritual means.”

Christian Science is a religious practice, a way of life, and a system of healing that draws upon an understanding of spiritual truths illustrated throughout the Bible and the teachings of Christ Jesus. Its teachings include how one can reliably look to God and spiritual means alone to meet life’s needs, including health care needs, as well as the importance of being moral and law-abiding. Many Christian Scientists have found genuine preventive and curative health and healing in this way, sometimes for several generations. Health care decisions for Christian Scientists are not dictated by the Christian Science church or its theology. Rather, such decisions are motivated by each individual’s experience with their religious practice of Christian Science, and with a sincere care for public health, obedience to health laws, and regard for the safety of others.

To understand why a Christian Scientist would want to maintain space in law for prayerful practice of healing, accounts of protection and healing through the practice of Christian Science — many of which are medically verified — have been published in church periodicals dating back to its inception in the late 1800s through the present day. The healing experiences represented in these publications provide just a representative glimpse of the many more unpublished accounts of prevention and healing that members have experienced in their lives.

Our members are following this issue with interest in maintaining clear space in law for the healing practice of Christian Science, while also deeply caring about public health and proper designations for medical licensure. We acknowledge that it can be challenging to include the religious beliefs and practices of a minority that may not be well-understood by the majority. At the same time, the sincere and wholehearted practice of our religion is important to us, and we believe it is a spiritual method of healing that is distinguishable from the licensed practice of medicine.

In sum, we would ask the Committee to consider including in the MPA the current religious accommodation found in 32 M.R.S.A. § 3270: “Nothing in this chapter may be construed as to affect or prevent the practice of the religious tenets of a church in the ministrations to the sick or suffering by mental or spiritual means.”

We would be happy to talk with you further to serve as a resource or to answer any questions as the Committee considers the above-referenced legislation.

Sincerely,

Rosalind Revilock-Frost

Christian Science Committee on Publication for Maine

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