

Testimony for LD129*February 2, 2023*Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Thank you chairs Rafferty and Brennan and members of the committee. I speak in support of LD129 as an individual. My name is Elisabeth Fowlie Mock and I am a Family Medicine and Addiction Medicine Physician from Bangor.

I have dreamt for years of the University of Maine Medical School. As a self-identified Mainer (but not native), I have three degrees, but none from UMaine. When I was applying to medical school in 1991, I applied to the University of Vermont and the University of Massachusetts, but I couldn't come home for my training. Despite this, I made my way back in 2003. I consider myself fortunate that my native Mainer son is now attending the University of Maine for a high caliber education in Engineering.

Studying the impact of creating a medical school in Penobscot County will allow the state to formally determine the impact of committing to grown more of our own doctors. Our flagship university has an excellent nursing school, is an R1 rated research institution, and has much of the necessary infrastructure for professional healthcare education. In my quest to become a Black Bear myself, I took a masters level nursing curriculum design course last spring which was excellent.

For comparison, the University of Vermont Medical School has an enrollment of just under 500 students, yet a population about half of ours. They have 30% of students from Vermont and had 72 applicants for every seat in this year's incoming class. That also means that 70% of their medical students are paying out-of-state tuition rates. 20% of their students come from low socioeconomic backgrounds; it is the most diverse college of their university; and nearly half of their graduates go on to practice in New England.

Even in our most populated counties in Maine, we have a Primary Care physician shortage. Patients in York County are still struggling to find primary care providers after one practice suddenly closed to them in October. We all know Maine is the oldest state in the nation and our need for well-trained physicians and nurses is acute and chronic.

While my dreams of becoming a Black Bear may be realized through a second Master's degree, having this study assess the feasibility of creating the University of Maine Medical School is a first step for others to find "the college of our hearts always." In my dreams of the University of Maine Medical School now, my daughter will be a member of the inaugural class. Thank you.

Elisabeth Fowlie Mock, MD, MPH
Board Certified in Family Medicine and Addiction Medicine
Bangor, Maine
Mockdoc1@gmail.com
207-577-3402