



Kevin O'Connell

7 Sites Lane

Brewer, ME 04412

Home: (207) 735-6978

Kevin.OConnell@legislature.maine.gov

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION

AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: Maine Relay 711

February 16, 2023

Testimony of Representative Kevin O'Connell introducing
LD 275, Resolve, to Require the Maine Board of Pharmacy to Review Work Practices and Treatment of Pharmacists
Before the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee

Good afternoon, Senator Bailey, Representative Perry and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee. I am Representative Kevin O'Connell, and I represent House District 20, which is most of the City of Brewer. I am here today to introduce **LD 275, Resolve, to Require the Maine Board of Pharmacy to Review Work Practices and Treatment of Pharmacists**.

The resolve before you today does just what the title suggests: It directs the Maine Board of Pharmacy to conduct a study to review the work practices and treatment of pharmacists.

I bring this legislation forward following conversations with a constituent, who is a pharmacist. He shared with me that pharmacists and pharmacy technicians are overworked, understaffed and dealing with a great amount of workplace stress. He emphasized to me that this stress impacts the safety of every patient, which is a concern that should be taken seriously.

In looking into the matter, I have found that other states have recently taken a look into the workplace practices and patient safety within pharmacies, including West Virginia, Ohio and Tennessee. In 2019, the American Pharmacists Association conducted a national workforce study of pharmacists, with nearly 5,500 responses across the country. While some of the data collected could be useful in evaluating the concerns you'll hear today, I believe that Maine-based data and data collected after the height of the COVID-19 pandemic would be most useful.

After the Board of Pharmacy conducts their study, they would be required to report back to this committee in early December of this year. This committee may then report out a bill based on the findings of the study.

My hope is that the Board of Pharmacy, through the study, would gather data on pharmacists' perceptions of staffing, workload conditions and workplace safety. I also hope that the study would include responses from a variety of settings, including but not limited to community pharmacies, inpatient and outpatient hospitals and long-term care facility pharmacies.

Thank you for your time and attention this afternoon. I would be happy to answer any questions you have for me, but the pharmacists here today may be better suited to provide specifics.