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Testimony of Rep. Lydia Crafts introducing
LD 1494, An Act to Help Address the Worker Shortage in Behavioral Health Care Services by Allowing Provisional Licensure and Providing for Reimbursement for Out-of-state Licensees
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

Good Afternoon Senator Bailey, Representative Perry and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services. I am Representative Lydia Crafts and have the honor of serving District 46. I am here today to present LD 1495, "*An Act to Help Address the Worker Shortage in Behavioral Health Care Services by Allowing Provisional Licensure and Providing for Reimbursement for Out-of-state Licensees.*"

The staggering statistics of behavioral health needs in our state are driving several pieces of policy this session. LD 1494 is designed to address the reported problem of delays in the provision of licenses for behavioral health workers. Behavioral health agencies have thousands on their waitlists going without critical care. New graduates and clinicians moving to Maine from other states report waiting for weeks and sometimes months to receive their license to practice.

LD 1494 proposes a provisional license for behavioral health clinicians that would be valid for 90 days and allow holders of the license to practice and bill in the State of Maine. To qualify for the provisional license, new graduates must have completed the requirements for licensure and out-of-state clinicians must already hold an equivalent license from the state of origin.

In discussions with stakeholders, it became clear that there are discrepancies we have yet to address. I ask the committee to provide additional time to work with the Department and stakeholders to find an acceptable compromise. I am happy to answer any questions and appreciate your time today.