

ELIAS PASQUERILLO TESTIMONY:

Senator Bailey, Representative Perry and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee, my name is Elias Pasquerillo. I am speaking to you today as one of the UNE student representatives of the Maine Association of Physician Assistants. I am a resident of Portland but grew up in Waldo county and Hermon. I have lived in Maine my whole life and I am now a first year student in the University of New England's PA program. I am speaking to you today to encourage you to vote "Ought to Pass for LD 2043."

The PA Compact is a common-sense policy that will increase access to care in the state of Maine. Any patient in the state of Maine that has needed to see a specialist or even establish a new primary care provider knows firsthand: the time to get an appointment is far too long. The PA Compact will tap into a wealth of providers that can provide telehealth services to patients living in the state of Maine. Telehealth appointments will shorten the amount of time for a person to see a provider, and may prove invaluable regarding time-sensitive conditions. Further, new providers moving to Maine from another compact state will be able to see patients much sooner if this bill is passed. The PA profession itself was created to improve and expand access to healthcare.¹ Consistent with this goal, the PA Compact increases access of care to patients while upholding the same rigorous licensing requirements as before. If anything, licensing will be held to a higher standard than before, as licensing boards of different compact states will be able to communicate more effectively than before to ensure providers are of the highest quality. We know that increasing access to healthcare is a common concern held by this committee. Thus, passing the PA Compact makes perfect sense towards realizing this goal.

The PA Compact will allow Maine to attract health students and providers to the state. New healthcare students and providers will have an incentive to work in a compact state over a non-compact state. Many of my classmates have brought up that they would choose a school in a compact state over a school in a non-compact state if given the choice. I believe we achieve better results through cooperation, and the PA compact is a commitment towards working together, towards standardizing care and reducing the burden on providers and regulators while increasing the quality of care. This idea of cooperation in healthcare is very attractive to people. In the past few years, we witnessed that people want to move to Maine and people want to live in Maine. In fact, Maine was one of the top two states that people moved to in 2022.² The PA Compact, if passed, will reduce a barrier for new out of state providers to move to the state and begin practicing. Maine is a beautiful place to live. Making it easy for new providers to move and practice here will benefit everyone in the long run. And, as an aging state, Maine desperately needs new providers to care for its residents. This is an incredibly exciting proposal and should be passed.

In closing, the PA Compact is a continuation of the mission of the PA position itself, to increase access of healthcare to patients. Maine has compact agreements for occupational therapists, physicians, registered nurses, CNAs, and more. Let's continue this trend towards cooperation in healthcare by adding PAs to that list. Thank you.

1. https://www.aapa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/HistoricalMilestones_August2019.pdf
2. <https://www.bangordailynews.com/2023/01/03/business/maine-inbound-moving-2022-xoasq1i29i/>