



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Rep. Holly T. Sargent neither for nor against

LD 2214, An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025
Before the Appropriations and Financial Services Committee

Sen. Rotundo, Rep. Sachs, Sen. Baldacci and Rep Meyer, and distinguished members of both the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Holly Sargent and I represent House District 147, the eastern two-thirds of the town of York, from the turnpike to the sea.

I am here today to champion and complement what Dr. Taylor and Senator Lawrence have said because York hospital lies in the heart of my district. In many ways, it IS the heart of my district. It is a core institution, like a University or a mill, that has shaped the identity, the demographics and the culture of the town for over 120 years. The vast majority of York's citizens have a link to the hospital: 1,100 employees, thousands of retirees, hundreds of volunteers – not to mention generations of patients. It is woven into the fabric of our past and our future.

It is essential to our economy, fueling the community with over \$110 Million annually in payroll.

It is essential to our safety-providing emergency services to ambulances from 8 towns.

It is essential to attracting tourists and hospitality providers from Kittery to Wells.

My constituents, from business owners to individuals who factored the presence of a fine hometown hospital into their retirement plans, are clamoring for assistance. We need the State's help to keep our hospital viable.

I have noticed during my short tenure in the Legislature that Southern York County is rarely discussed. While weathering occasional jabs about our being part of New Hampshire, my colleagues often seem to feel that the state stops at Greater Portland.

Well, we are not part of New Hampshire. We are a vital, beautiful part of Maine. With cliffs and beaches, historic villages, luxury hotels and nostalgic family-oriented trailer campgrounds, we attract nearly 50,000 visitors annually. Our state income tax and robust hospitality taxes feed the state coffers.

We are minimum receivers for school funding, our town plows its state roads, and York has 130 units of workforce housing recently opened or in process specifically aimed at teachers, nurses and hospital technicians. We do our part.

I recognize the statewide need for the new system DHHS is proposing and appreciate the desire to minimize special arrangements going forward. The vibrancy and safety of a critical part of the state, however, should not be sacrificed. The new initiative will create a larger pie after attracting Federal dollars. We do not ask for a portion of these added dollars, we simply ask to hold York Hospital and the region it serves harmless under the new system of allocation.