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Testimony in Opposition to LD 2174

An Act to Protect Consumers from Predatory Medical Credit Card Providers

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Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and distinguished members of HCIFS, my name is Amy Arata and I represent House District 104. I am here to present testimony from my son, who was actually a customer of Care Credit, a company which would have access by Mainers severely restricted under this bill.

My name is David Arata and I am a medical school student. I urge you to oppose LD2174, a bill that among other things would prohibit medical credit card providers from offering loans for LASIK eye surgery, a service that allowed me to receive 20:15 vision, better than 20:20, which I was responsible with. This bill is not only unnecessary and harmful, but also violates the economic freedom and personal choice of Maine citizens.

LASIK eye surgery is a safe, effective, and widely available procedure that can correct various vision problems, such as nearsightedness, farsightedness, and astigmatism. It can improve the quality of life of millions of people who suffer from poor eyesight and depend on glasses or contact lenses. LASIK can also reduce the risk of eye infections, allergies, and injuries that are associated with contact lenses; Moreover, LASIK eye surgery can be essential for certain employment opportunities that require optimal vision and eye health. For example, some careers such as a lifeguard or roles in the military, law enforcement, aviation, sports, and entertainment may have strict vision standards or preferences that exclude candidates who wear glasses or contact lenses. LASIK can help people pursue their dream jobs and achieve their full potential in their chosen fields.

However, LASIK eye surgery is not cheap. The average cost of the procedure in the United States is about \$2,200 per eye. Many people who could benefit from LASIK cannot afford to pay this amount upfront. That is why medical credit card providers offer flexible financing options for LASIK patients, such as low-interest rates, deferred payments, and extended repayment plans. These options enable more people to access LASIK and enjoy its benefits.

LD2174 would take away these options and force people to either pay the full cost of LASIK at once or give up on their dream of having clear vision. This bill would discriminate against low-income and middle-class families who need LASIK the most. It would also deprive them of their economic freedom and personal choice to decide how to spend their money and manage their health.

LD2174 is based on the false assumption that medical credit card providers are predatory and exploit LASIK patients. This is not true. Medical credit card providers are regulated by the same laws and agencies that oversee other credit card issuers. They are required to disclose all the terms and conditions of their loans, including the interest rates, fees, and penalties. They are also subject to consumer protection laws that prohibit unfair, deceptive, or abusive practices. LASIK patients are not naive nor uninformed. They are capable of making rational and informed decisions about their finances and health.

LD2174 is not a solution to any problem. It is a problem in itself. It would harm the interests of LASIK patients, medical credit card providers, and eye care professionals. It would also infringe on the economic rights and liberties of Maine citizens. I urge you to reject this bill and stand up for the vision, health, and freedom of the people of Maine.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.