



World Education Services Statement of Support for LD 105

World Education Services (WES) supports LD 105, which would create an alternative pathway to medical licensure for eligible internationally trained physicians to practice medicine in Maine.

The United States currently faces a serious shortage of practicing physicians¹ in both primary and specialty care—a gap that is projected to widen over the coming decade. States across the country are seeking a way to ensure that all citizens, especially those in rural and underserved communities, have sufficient access to medical care. In Maine, more than 80,000 people live in 76 federally designated primary care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs). Maine will require an additional 130 primary care physicians by 2030 to meet the state’s health care needs.²

In addition, the demand for bilingual health care workers in the state is increasing, reflected in the 180 percent increase in such job postings between 2018 and 2022.³ Internationally trained physicians are well-positioned to help alleviate primary and specialty care shortages, at the same time filling the growing need for multilingual providers. Their cultural competence is also an asset, as studies have found that patient outcomes improve when health care teams are more diverse.⁴ Yet systemic barriers prevent many internationally trained physicians from being able to practice medicine in the U.S. Legislation that provides an alternative license pathway to internationally trained physicians allows states to benefit from the education, skills, and experience of a larger pool of qualified practitioners.

LD 105 will help address Maine’s physician shortage, ensure a more diverse health workforce, and promote access to quality care for all state residents by making licensing pathways more accessible for internationally trained physicians in the state.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement of support.

WES is a non-profit social enterprise that supports the educational, economic, and social inclusion of immigrants, refugees, and international students. For 50 years, WES has set the standard for

¹ “AAMC Report Reinforces Mounting Physician Shortage.” Association of American Medical Colleges, (June 11, 2021). <https://www.aamc.org/news/press-releases/aamc-report-reinforces-mounting-physician-shortage>.

² “Designated Health Professional Shortage Areas Statistics: First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2024 Designated HPSA Quarterly Summary.” Bureau of Health Workforce, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, (December 31, 2024). <https://data.hrsa.gov/default/generatehpsaquarterlyreport>.

³ “The Growing Demand for Healthcare Workers in Maine.” American Immigration Council. https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/the_growing_demand_for_healthcare_workers_in_maine.pdf.

⁴ L E Gomez and Patrick Bernet. “Diversity improves performance and outcomes.” National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, (August 2019). <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30765101>.



international academic credential evaluation, supporting millions of people as they seek to achieve their academic and professional goals. Through decades of experience as a leader in global education, WES has developed a wide range of tools to pursue social impact at scale. From evaluating academic credentials to shaping policy, designing programs, and providing philanthropic funding, we partner with a diverse set of organizations, leaders, and networks to uplift individuals and drive systems change. Together with its partners, WES enables people to learn, work, and thrive in new places.