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Testimony of Representative Holly Eaton introducing

LD 409, An Act to Enhance the Mobility of Licensed Massage Therapists Across State Lines

Before the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee

Good morning, Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and esteemed members of the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee. My name is Holly Eaton, and I represent House District 15, which includes the communities of Deer Isle, Stonington, Brooklin, Tremont, Southwest Harbor, Frenchboro, Swan's Island, Isle au Haut, and Vinalhaven. I am here today to introduce **LD 409, An Act to Enhance the Mobility of Licensed Massage Therapists Across State Lines**.

This bill was brought to me by a fellow massage therapist, Mark Brasseur, LMT, who recognized the need for greater flexibility and professional mobility for licensed massage therapists in Maine. Over the past several months, I have worked closely with stakeholders and national experts to bring this initiative forward. I would also like to highlight the contributions of two professionals who have been instrumental in shaping the compact and will be attending via video today to testify and answer any questions about how it is being developed:

- Patty Glenn, Director of Education and Professional Mobility at the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards
- Grant Minix, Policy Analyst at the Council of State Governments

The Interstate Massage Compact is currently in development, with multiple states—including Maine—working on legislation to establish it. Once enacted, this compact will create a pathway for licensed massage therapists to practice across participating states without needing additional licenses, while still maintaining high professional standards.

Importantly, this compact will not impact therapists who wish to practice only in Maine. Their licenses will remain exactly as they are today. This initiative simply lays the groundwork for those who want the flexibility to work in other states once the compact is fully formed.

I also want to address a concern raised by practitioners of other bodywork modalities who have reached out to me. I want to be clear—this compact applies only to licensed massage therapists

District 15: Brooklin, Deer Isle, Eagle Island Township, Frenchboro, Southwest Harbor, Stonington, Swan's Island, Tremont, Isle au Haut, Vinalhaven

and does not impact other forms of bodywork. If you are a practitioner of modalities such as Reiki, reflexology, or other non-licensed forms of bodywork, this will not change your ability to practice in Maine.

I know that some concerns have been raised about the exam requirement, as Maine currently does not require therapists to take a licensing exam. While I understand that change can feel daunting, this requirement exists to ensure national consistency in licensure standards. For those who wish to remain licensed solely in Maine, nothing will change. For those who want access to the compact once it is established, meeting this standard opens doors to greater professional mobility.

Another concern is the difference in required training hours between Maine and the compact. I want to emphasize that the compact provides a built-in solution—continuing education units (CEUs) can be used to meet the compact's requirements. This means that experienced Maine therapists won't have to start from scratch; they can use ongoing education to qualify.

Beyond the benefits to legitimate practitioners, this compact also strengthens consumer protection and public safety by helping states crack down on fraudulent practitioners and illicit businesses. By requiring therapists to meet national standards and share disciplinary information between states, the compact will help ensure that legitimate, trained professionals can practice freely, while those exploiting the system face greater scrutiny.

Massage therapy can play a crucial role in enhancing tourism in Maine, particularly in our coastal and mountain regions. These areas, which are central to Maine's identity as a vacation destination, can benefit significantly from a more robust workforce, capable of meeting the demands of both residents and visitors. By allowing licensed therapists to move freely across state lines, we can support Maine's tourism industry and address our workforce shortages.

This initiative also reflects the broader support within the legislature for transferability of licenses and the importance of maintaining high standards while expanding opportunities. By helping to establish this compact, Maine can ensure that our professionals are well-equipped to contribute to our local communities and economy.

By joining other states in developing this compact, Maine can support its massage therapists by expanding professional options, ensuring consistency in standards, and strengthening our workforce—all while protecting consumers from fraud and abuse. I encourage the committee to support this bill and help Maine's massage professionals access greater mobility while maintaining the integrity of our licensure system.

Thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions.