

132nd Legislature
Senate of
Maine
Senate District 29

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Testimony of Senator Anne Carney in support of
**LD 1028, “Resolve, to Establish the Task Force to Study Equitable Access to
Maternal Health Care and Birthing Facilities,”**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
March 27, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and esteemed members of the Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Senator Anne Carney, proudly representing Senate District 29, which includes South Portland, Cape Elizabeth and part of Scarborough. It is a pleasure to be with you today to speak as a Co-Sponsor in support of LD 1028, “Resolve, to Establish the Task Force to Study Equitable Access to Maternal Health Care and Birthing Facilities.”

We have all been watching with trepidation as birthing centers close across the state and patients in labor face longer and longer trips to the hospital. Legislators who work on child and maternal health care policy have watched the options for Maine families disappear, and we worry when the next announcement will be made. In fact, one came just this morning, from MDI Hospital in Bar Harbor.

District 29, near Portland, is served by two hospitals and maternal health practices. With a relatively large population base this area has adequate access. However, much of the state is in crisis. We all know how important access to prenatal care is to the health of newborns and their parents. National data shows that public insurance – Medicaid and here in our state MaineCare – can have a significant impact in helping to keep the doors open of these maternal health care facilities. It also shows that access has a positive impact on newborn and maternal health outcomes as well as pregnancy survival rates. According to a 2024 report from Maine Consumers for Affordable Health Care, states with Medicaid expansion programs, like MaineCare, are estimated to have reduced maternal mortality by about 7 per 100,000 births.

Maternal health is about so much more than just delivering babies. It is about keeping mothers and their babies healthy during pregnancy and getting them off to a good start during their critical first year. It is about ensuring we as a state are making Maine welcoming and livable for young families. It is about helping Maine grow and thrive.

LD 1028, “Resolve, to Establish the Task Force to Study Equitable Access to Maternal Health Care and Birthing Facilities,” would help Legislators better understand the needs and gaps in

maternal health care in every region in our State and among birthing center patient populations, including the essential services closure process and the capacity of the maternal health care workforce. It would help us make the most effective policy decisions about how we invest often scarce financial resources in maternal health care services across the State and ensure equitable access for the most vulnerable birthing center patient populations.

I hope you will join me in supporting this bill. I welcome any questions you may have.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a trailing flourish.

Anne Carney
State Senator, District 29