

Letter of Support for LD 581
An Act to Fund the Doctors for Maine's Future Scholarship Program
March 31, 2025

Dear Senator Rafferty, Representative Noonan Murphy, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education,

My name is Annika Gallandt, I am a third-year medical student at the Tufts University Maine Track Program, a recipient of the Doctors for Maine's Future Scholarship, and I am writing in support of LD 581. I was born and raised in central Maine and for my entire life being a 'Mainer' has been at the core of my identity. Although I left my home state for college, I always knew that I would return to settle in Maine, this is where I want to work, contribute to community, and eventually raise a family of my own.

Growing up I witnessed how many Mainers have difficulties accessing care due to geographic and financial barriers. Part of what drew me to pursue a career as a physician was the unique ability to treat and advocate for individual patients while also improving access to healthcare for entire communities. However, as I started to research medical school programs it became clear to me that the financial burden of medical school tuition would likely dictate both where I went to school and possibly the medical specialty I would eventually choose. The freedom to return to my home state to practice in a rural area felt at odds with the immense financial burden of medical school tuition and the student loans I would accumulate. When I learned that the Tufts Maine Track program offered scholarships to qualified students to make the cost of attendance comparable to in-state tuition I knew this was the program that was most in-line with my personal and professional goals.

The Maine Track is comprised of highly successful students all of whom chose this program for its exemplary academics as well as its dedication to community-based medicine. I along with the majority of my classmates were accepted into multiple medical schools and had a choice when it came to selecting what program to attend. My decision and the decision of many of my peers was strongly influenced by the financial support offered by the Doctors for Maine's Future Scholarship Program. Receiving scholarship support made my decision to commit to the Maine Track easy. In my three years as a student in the program the financial support from this scholarship has given me freedom to explore and consider careers in all fields of medicine. It has removed much of the financial pressure to choose a specialized career based on future compensation and rather has given me the opportunity to weigh personal interests, community need, and ability to practice at a rural hospital into my decision.

The Doctors for Maine's Future Scholarship doesn't solely impact student recipients, it also indirectly influences healthcare provided to Maine citizens. In my clinical rotations I have seen firsthand the enthusiasm and support Mainers have for the Maine Track program and its potential to improve the urgent need for physicians in rural communities. 74% of former Maine Track students who completed their residencies in Maine stay in state to practice. From my own experience and the experiences of my classmates, training in Maine for medical school has increased our interest in staying here for residency. Put simply, Maine's investment in medical

students has already impacted the physician workforce across the state in a positive way. Terminating funding for the Doctors for Maine's Future Scholarship Program will have widespread negative impacts both for future medical students and patients across the state of Maine. I urge you to support LD 581, "An Act to Fund the Doctors for Maine's Future Scholarship Program" to support the future of medical education in Maine and the health of all Maine citizens and communities.

Sincerely,

Annika Mallory Gallandt
Tufts University School of Medicine – Maine Track Program Class of 2026