

Testimony from Bethany Miles Before the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

LD 581 An Act to Fund the Doctors for Maine's Future Scholarship Program

Public Hearing: March 31, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Bethany Miles and I am a 4th year medical student at the University of New England College of Osteopathic Medicine (UNE COM). Thank you for considering this testimony in support of LD 581.

While many recognize the high cost of medical education, it may not be as common knowledge that many expenses begin well before an acceptance letter. In addition to costs incurred from a 4-year undergraduate degree and prerequisite coursework, standard registration for the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT), a notoriously important requirement for medical school applications, costs \$345. Should a student need to retake this exam (i.e. to try for a more competitive score) they will need to pay this amount again. If they need to cancel or reschedule, they will have to pay anywhere from \$50-\$200 without a full refund. Given the high stakes of this exam, many students spend hundreds to even thousands of dollars on study materials or prep courses. Then come applications. The initial cost of applying to one MD program is \$175 and \$198 for one DO program, plus \$47 for each additional MD program to which a student applies and \$57 for each additional DO program. Furthermore, most programs charge a fee for their secondary applications that can vary from \$50-\$200 each. Given that pre-medical students apply to an average of 16 programs in hopes of an interview invite, you can see how this entire process quickly becomes a financial burden even before that first tuition bill.

So where does this leave the average medical student hopeful? Especially ones from Maine where the average individual income in 2023 was \$38,152; nearly half the national average. Where does that leave a mother of 3 from Old Town, Maine who dreams of being a doctor? Right in front of you I'm happy to say, and that is because of this scholarship. What was once an insurmountable financial hurdle, became feasible for me and my family. Because of this scholarship, I have been able to complete the entirety of my medical school training in Maine. This allowed for me to network and form great mentorships with Maine providers very early on, which undoubtedly played a role in my Match Day success on March 21st. I am thrilled to share that I get to stay in Maine for residency as part of Maine Medical Center's rural track program in psychiatry.

Continuing to fund the Doctors for Maine's Future scholarship program is so much more than helping people pay for medical school. It gives hope to our people by addressing the significant need for doctors in Maine, and sends the message to aspiring Maine physicians that socioeconomic status should not be what stands in the way of pursuing your dreams. Thank you to the State of Maine for investing in me and my dream, and I look forward to spending my career caring for you in return.

Bethany Miles, RN, BSN, OMS-IV
Gorham, Maine