

**Testimony of Grace Gile
in Strong Support of LD 581
“An Act to Fund the Doctors for Maine’s Future Scholarship Program”**

March 31, 2025

Senator Raferty, Representative Noonan Murphy, and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, as a student of the Maine Track Program I am testifying today in strong support of LD 581, “An Act to Fund the Doctors for Maine's Future Scholarship Program.”

My name is Grace Gile, and I am a York County native where I grew up on an apple farm in Alfred. I am a member of the class of 2026 at Tufts University School of Medicine on the Maine Track and a current Doctors for Maine’s Future Scholar. There is no doubt that this scholarship has allowed me to receive an excellent education in my home state, without worry of substantial financial burden.

I grew up in a family of traditions: my father is a ninth-generation farmer, my mother a third-generation nurse. I always knew I wanted to follow in my mom’s footsteps and work in healthcare but wanted to create my own path in my career. In college, I never even considered medicine as a career because of the notorious financial burden of attending medical school. It felt like something that I, the first person in my family to move away and obtain a four-year degree, was simply unable to do. It wasn’t until I had heard about the Maine Track program and the scholarships available to students from Maine that I was able to picture myself becoming a physician.

The Maine Track is a program that not only invests in its students, but it also invests in the state of Maine. It provides the state with a vital resource: access to highly trained physicians. The program emphasizes early clinical experience throughout various communities in the state. Personally, I have been in clinics ranging from Biddeford, to Wiscasset, to Belgrade, and most recently, I moved to Caribou for nine months and completed all my third-year rotations there.

My patients in Aroostook County knew the struggle of finding healthcare close to home: at least twice a month a patient or their family member would beg me to come back and practice there when I graduated. I didn’t enter medical school wanting to do rural medicine, I wasn’t even set on staying in or building my career in Maine. It was my time in Caribou that showed me both the beauty and challenges of rural medicine.

It is the unique combination of the Maine Track’s curriculum and the financial support from the Doctors for Maine’s Future Scholarship that have encouraged me to explore a career in rural primary care. Without the aid that this scholarship has provided me, I would be graduating

medical school over a quarter million dollars in debt and would be much less motivated to go through with my current career plans simply due to the burden of debt and the significantly lower salaries in primary care specialties.

I care about this scholarship fund because I care about the community that raised me in Alfred, the community where I assumed the role of a medical student for the first time in Wiscasset, and the community that I grew to call home in Caribou. Please vote in support of the Doctors for Maine's Future Scholarship to not only support Mainers who dream of becoming physicians, but also to support our communities across the state who deeply need access to care.