



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE

University of Maine System Testimony in Support of LD 1290, *An Act to Update The Laws Regarding Athletic Trainers*, Presented by USM Associate Professor of Athletic Training Dominique Ross PhD, ATC – April 15, 2025

Good Afternoon Chair Bailey, Chair Mathieson and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee. My name is Dr. Dominique Ross, and I am an Associate Professor of Athletic Training at the University of Southern Maine (USM). I am here today to testify on behalf of the University of Maine System (UMS) in support of LD 1290, *An Act to Update The Laws Regarding Athletic Trainers*.

Our System, which offers graduate-level Athletic Training Programs at USM and the University of Maine, has a long-standing commitment to preparing qualified athletic trainers for Maine's workforce. In addition, all UMS institutions with varsity athletic programs demonstrate their dedication to student-athlete health and well-being by employing athletic trainers.

LD 1290 addresses several key areas that will benefit athletic training students, clinicians and the patients they serve. This bill is a necessary measure to ensure the continued high quality and safety of athletic training services provided to athletes across Maine. As the field of sports medicine evolves, it is important that our state laws governing athletic trainers keep pace with current professional standards.

A particularly important aspect of this bill is its commitment to modernizing the language within Maine law to be consistent with the current national certification and academic accreditation standards. This alignment is critical for several reasons:

- **Reflecting Current Best Practices:** The Board of Certification for Athletic Trainers (BOC) and the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education (CAATE) are the national bodies that set the standards for the education, examination, and practice of athletic trainers. Updating Maine law to reflect their terminology and requirements ensures that our state's regulations align with the most current evidence-based practices and professional expectations. Furthermore, this alignment specifically ensures that individuals identifying as Athletic Training Students are enrolled in accredited academic programs providing essential oversight of their academic performance, professional development, and athletic training skills proficiency.
- **Ensuring Clarity and Consistency:** Using outdated or inconsistent language can lead to confusion among practitioners, employers, and the public regarding the qualifications and scope of practice of athletic trainers. Modernizing the language will provide greater clarity and ensure that Maine's laws accurately reflect the nationally recognized standards of the profession.
- **Facilitating Reciprocity and Mobility:** When state laws align with national standards, it can facilitate the process for qualified athletic trainers from other states to become licensed in Maine, and vice versa. This can be particularly important for attracting and retaining skilled professionals in our state.

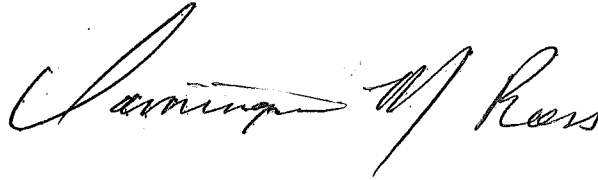
- **Maintaining Accreditation Standards:** Educational programs for athletic trainers in Maine must adhere to CAATE accreditation standards. Updating state law to reflect current professional language supports these educational programs in their mission to prepare competent and qualified athletic trainers.

Beyond modernization of language, we also support the provisions that:

- **Extend the length of time that out-of-state athletic trainers with visiting sports teams may provide athletic training services:** This will better accommodate teams participating in longer competitions in Maine.

By updating our laws to reflect current certification and accreditation standards, LD 1290 demonstrates a commitment to maintaining a high level of professionalism and ensuring the health and safety of all individuals who receive care from athletic trainers in Maine. On behalf of Maine's public universities and the students and student-athletes we serve, we urge your support of this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dominique M. Ross". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dominique" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Ross".

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