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## *Testimony of Representative Holly Eaton in support of*

### **LD 376, An Act to Improve Maternal and Infant Health Outcomes Through Doula Care** *Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services*

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Representative Holly Eaton, and I represent House District 15, which includes a number of coastal, rural and island communities across Hancock County. I'm also a Certified Doula and a Licensed Massage Therapist, and I'm here today in strong support of **LD 376, An Act to Improve Maternal and Infant Health Outcomes Through Doula Care**, sponsored by Senator Tepler.

As a doula, I can speak to the unique role we play in supporting families through pregnancy, labor and the postpartum period. Doulas are nonclinical professionals trained to provide continuous emotional, physical and informational support. We do not replace nurses or midwives—we work alongside medical professionals to help the birthing person feel more confident, more informed and more at ease. We offer comfort measures like breathing techniques or positioning during labor, help families understand what to expect and provide consistent, compassionate presence throughout the birthing experience. We also support the transition to parenthood in the weeks following birth.

In a system where birthing people may not have the same provider at every appointment or delivery, the ability to have a doula they trust and know can make a powerful difference. It creates a sense of continuity, security and reassurance. LD 376 acknowledges this by ensuring reimbursement under MaineCare for up to four prenatal visits, attendance at the birth and four postpartum visits with a doula. This kind of access is not just a nicety—it's essential care.

We know that doula support improves health outcomes, lowers rates of complications and enhances the emotional well-being of parents. This bill ensures more Mainers have the opportunity to receive that care—especially those in rural, underserved and lower-income communities.

I am grateful to Senator Tepler for bringing this bill forward and to the cosponsors for recognizing how meaningful doula care can be. I urge you to support LD 376 and make this kind of support available to all Maine families who need it.

District 15: Brooklin, Deer Isle, Eagle Island Township, Frenchboro, Southwest Harbor, Stonington, Swan's Island, Tremont, Isle au Haut, Vinalhaven