



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1400
TTY: Maine Relay 711

Holly Rae Eaton

P.O Box 277
Deer Isle, ME 04627
Phone: (207) 610-9281
Holly.Eaton@legislature.maine.gov

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Testimony of Representative Holly Eaton in support of
LD 1523, An Act to Improve Perinatal Care Through Expanded Access to
Doula Services
Before the Health and Human Services Committee

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, I'm Representative Holly Eaton, and I'm proud to represent House District 15, a coastal and island district in Hancock County. I'm also a Certified Doula and a Licensed Massage Therapist. I'm honored to serve as a cosponsor of **LD 1523, An Act to Improve Perinatal Care Through Expanded Access to Doula Services**, presented by Representative Dhalac.

As someone who has supported pregnant people both through massage and birth work, I know how powerful it is to have someone by your side who is there just for you. Doulas are trained, nonclinical professionals who provide physical, emotional and informational support through the entire perinatal period. That might mean helping with positioning during labor, talking through anxieties, offering comfort measures or simply being a consistent presence when a family needs it most. We also help navigate the early postpartum period when new parents often feel isolated or overwhelmed.

For many Mainers—especially those on MaineCare or living in rural areas—the opportunity to have a doula at their side can bring a critical sense of safety, reassurance and continuity. It means having someone you know and trust there to listen, to support and to advocate. It's a profound form of care, and LD 1523 takes a comprehensive approach to making that care more widely available.

This bill not only establishes reimbursement for doula services under MaineCare, it also creates a **Doula Advisory Committee** made up of practicing doulas to guide implementation. That inclusion is vital—it ensures the lived experience of those providing care helps shape policies that are effective, inclusive and equitable. The bill also places emphasis on recruiting a diverse workforce, offering low-cost continuing education and maintaining a reimbursement rate that supports the sustainability of the field.

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

LD 1523 recognizes that expanding access to doula care isn't just about payment—it's about building a system that lifts up birth-workers and ensures that every family in Maine, regardless of their income or ZIP code, can receive care that is consistent, informed and deeply human.

I respectfully urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1523. Thank you for your time and commitment to the health of Maine families.