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Testimony of Representative Drew Gattine presenting

LD 2154, An Act to Establish the Health Information Technology Fund to Support a State-designated Statewide Health Information Exchange *Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services*

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and colleagues on the Health and Human Services Committee, I am Representative Drew Gattine, and I am proud to serve House District 126, which includes portions of Saco, Scarborough and Westbrook. I am pleased to appear before you to present **LD 2154, An Act to Establish the Health Information Technology Fund to Support a State-designated Statewide Health Information Exchange**.

This legislation seeks to create a platform for ongoing funding to safeguard Maine health care providers' access to the information they require to safely treat patients, while unlocking a significant amount of federal funding at a 3:1 federal match rate. Beginning in fiscal year 2026-27, the bill creates and partially funds the Health Information Technology Fund within the Department of Health and Human Services to support the operation and sustainability of our state-designated statewide health information exchange, HealthInfoNet.

HealthInfoNet collects, stores and organizes confidential medical information and records for 2.2 million people. This information is available to providers so that care can be delivered safely and effectively. It connects providers and is relied upon by them, including hospitals, rural health centers and provider practices.

Government entities also rely on the data to ensure that care is being delivered in a high-quality manner, including MaineCare, Maine Centers for Disease Control, Maine Department of Corrections, and the Veterans Administration. Each day, approximately 9,000 providers utilize the compiled clinical data in the process of providing care to their patients in Maine.

In last year's budget the governor proposed a new tax per bed tax on providers that use HealthInfoNet in order to provide the funding to maintain the functionality of the system. Providers strongly objected to this new tax and we did not move forward with it in the budget. HealthInfoNet and providers, in particular Maine's hospitals, physicians and primary care clinics, went back to the drawing board and worked together to come up with the proposal that I am presenting to you today.

I urge you to support LD 2154. This investment would maintain the quality and availability of HealthInfoNet and help ensure Maine people receive the quality health care they deserve.

Thank you for your time and I am happy to answer questions.

District 126: Portions of Westbrook, Scarborough and Saco