



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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

**Michelle N. Boyer**

(207) 239-6318

[Michelle.Boyer@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:Michelle.Boyer@legislature.maine.gov)

February 18, 2026

*Testimony of Rep. Michelle Boyer in support of*

**LD 2189, An Act to Require Prior Notification of Closures of Labor and Delivery Units and Changes in Maternity or Newborn Care Services by Hospitals as Recommended by the Commission to Evaluate the Scope of Regulatory Review and Oversight over Health Care Transactions That Impact the Delivery of Health Care Services in the State**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services*

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, my name is Michelle Boyer, and I represent House District 123, part of Cape Elizabeth. It is an honor to come before you today to introduce **LD 2189, An Act to Require Prior Notification of Closures of Labor and Delivery Units and Changes in Maternity or Newborn Care Services by Hospitals as Recommended by the Commission to Evaluate the Scope of Regulatory Review and Oversight over Health Care Transactions That Impact the Delivery of Health Care Services in the State.**

I want to thank Rep. Mathieson for sponsoring this measure. The language of this bill is based on the recommendations developed in the commission reference in the bill title, which I had the honor of chairing alongside Senator Tipping. The commission met five times over the course of three months, and its recommendations were developed with the information available during that time.

It has been well reported that hospitals across the state have been closing their birthing centers. This is due to a myriad of reasons, but primarily can be attributed to financial strains on our health care systems, workforce shortage statewide and a shift in demographics, meaning Maine's population keeps aging while birth rates continue to decline. In the last decade, 11 birthing units have closed, primarily in rural areas across the state. Four of those 11 closures occurred in the past year.<sup>1</sup>

When a birthing center or maternity ward closes in a community, it creates a domino effect. Families are forced to scramble and establish a new birthing plan. The question might become: do they move to be closer to a birthing center for easier access to care, or do they risk a longer commute to the hospital? The National Library of Medicine released a study indicating that longer commute times to the hospital can be a contributing factor to an increased risk of miscarriage and other adverse birthing outcomes.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://themainemonitor.org/healthcare-closure-maps/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12542174/>

LD 2189 seeks to require notification to those who will be impacted by a change in maternal and newborn services. Current guidance from the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Licensing and Certification is voluntary. That voluntary guidance asks that hospitals provide 30 days notice when there is a *temporary* closure and 120 days when the closure is *permanent*.<sup>3</sup> LD 2189 would mandate that no matter the length of time in which care is disrupted or changed – whether it be temporary or permanent – hospitals must provide surrounding hospitals, local EMS, fire and law enforcement, as well as registered patients, at least 120 days notice. We learned, during our Commission work, that though some hospitals were following the voluntary guidance, some were not.

By ensuring that families and providers have enough time to establish contingency birthing plans in the event of care disruption, we as lawmakers are investing in the health and well-being of Maine families and the communities in which they live.

Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions that you may have.

---

<sup>3</sup><https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/sites/maine.gov.dhhs.mecdc/files/maternal/Change%20of%20Maternity%20Care%20Services%20Policy%20February%202022.pdf>