



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: Maine Relay 711

**Gary Friedmann**

Phone: (207) 460-7362

Gary.Friedmann@legislature.maine.gov

February 18, 2026

*Testimony of Rep. Gary Friedmann 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 honorable members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, my name is Gary Friedmann and I represent House District 14, which includes Bar Harbor, Cranberry Isles, Lamoine and Mount Desert. It is my honor to testify 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.**

In the last two years my district has been shaken by two abrupt announcements. When Northern Light closed the Southwest Harbor Medical Center, serving 1,600 patients, the head of the center was abruptly informed of the closing – not consulted. Patients learned by word of mouth. The weekly paper published a story about the closure before patients received a letter from Northern Light. Local officials were never informed.

One year ago, decision makers at Mount Desert Island Hospital closed the maternity unit without consulting nurses or patients. The head of the unit was not consulted or informed. Patients learned about it from Facebook. Local officials were not consulted or informed.

While this bill requires four months' notice when closing maternity or newborn care services, it does not require review by the Commissioner of Health and Human Services, nor provide the opportunity to hold a public hearing to determine whether a significant disruption of a health service has occurred, nor does it require reinstatement if the terms by which the service was originally approved have been violated.

I propose that the Committee consider two amendments to this bill:

1. A requirement that the Commissioner of Health and Human Services review planned closures to determine whether they are justified and acceptable from a public health perspective; and
2. That this act be applicable to all closures of health services originally approved by the commissioner.

Thank you.