

Cayford, Edna

From: Natalie Saltz <natalieasaltz@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2026 3:49 PM
To: Cmte HCIFS
Subject: Please vote Ought NOT to Pass (ONTP) on LD 2206: An Act Expanding Access to Oral Health Care by Creating a New Path for Obtaining a License to Practice Dentistry

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This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.

Dear Members of the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee,

My name is Natalie Saltz and I am a practicing dental hygienist in Maine. I'm writing to urge you to vote **Ought NOT to Pass (ONTP) on LD 2206: An Act Expanding Access to Oral Health Care by Creating a New Path for Obtaining a License to Practice Dentistry**

LD 2206 proposes creating a new "associate dentist" license that would allow internationally trained dentists to practice in Maine without completing an accredited U.S. dental education pathway. While workforce shortages and access-to-care challenges are real concerns, this proposal raises serious questions about licensure standards and patient safety.

Internationally trained dentists already have an established and recognized pathway to practice in Maine. That pathway includes advanced standing programs at accredited U.S. dental schools, completion of required clinical education and competency training, and full licensure under the same standards applied to all dentists. Because this pathway already exists, the creation of a separate license category is not necessary to address an access gap.

Creating an "associate" license risks establishing two standards of educational preparation within the same profession. Maine patients deserve consistent standards of care regardless of their community, income level, or access point. Quality and safety should not vary based on the licensure category.

To be clear, this is not about country of origin. It is about maintaining consistent education, training, and licensure standards for everyone practicing dentistry in Maine. Workforce challenges should be addressed by strengthening and supporting existing pathways, not by creating parallel licensure structures with different requirements.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask the Committee to vote **Ought Not to Pass on LD 2206.**

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,
Natalie Arbour Saltz, IPDH, MPH

Hygienist
Portland, ME

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