

**TESTIMONY OF CHRISTINE MUNROE, DO
CHAIR, BOARD OF OSTEOPATHIC LICENSURE
DEPARTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL AND FINANCIAL REGULATION IN SUPPORT OF
L.D. 2233**

**An Act to Combine the Board of Licensure in Medicine and Board
of Osteopathic Licensure into a Single Licensing Board for All
Physicians and Physician Associates
Before the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services**

March 18, 2026

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dr. Christine Munroe, DO, and I am an osteopathic physician practicing in Maine and Chair of the Board of Osteopathic Licensure (BOL). I am testifying on behalf of the BOL in support of LD 2233.

The BOL licenses and regulates osteopathic physicians (DOs) and physician associates (PAs) in Maine. BOL is composed of 11 members: 6 physicians who actively practice medicine; 2 physician associates who actively render medical services; and 3 public members. BOL's primary mission is to protect the public health and welfare of Maine by ensuring that those who are licensed to practice medicine or render medical services are ethical, professional and competent. It fulfills this mission by licensing, regulating, and educating physicians and physician associates. Another medical board – the Board of Licensure in Medicine (BOLIM) is composed of the same members and with the same mission – but doing so regarding allopathic (MD) physicians.

Approximately 18 months ago, members of the BOL and the BOLIM met to discuss the possibility of merging into a single board. Those meetings led to the introduction of LD 805, a “Resolve to Direct the Board of Licensure in Medicine and the Board of Osteopathic Licensure to Conduct a Study Regarding the Feasibility of Combining Those Boards.” As representatives of the boards had already formed a workgroup and started regular meetings in January 2025, the committee voted ought not to pass on LD 805 and sent a letter to the boards instructing them to continue their work and report back in January 2026. And that's just what we did.

The joint merger workgroup met once a month beginning in January 2025, culminating in the boards voting to recommend the merger in a report to this Committee in January 2026. The recommendation to merge the boards and the extensive and detailed report filed with this Committee was the result of many hours of hard work, research, guidance and input from stakeholders – to include the Maine Osteopathic Association and the American Osteopathic Association. The BOL did not enter into this merger study lightly and the merger of the boards was not a foregone conclusion. Indeed, the BOL approached this possible merger with an open mind but with concerns about the possible loss of autonomy, independence and identity. That is why one of the key components of this merger is that a merged board would need to be composed of an equal number of osteopathic and allopathic physicians – which is what LD2233 creates.

In addition, as is outlined in the report to the Committee, the BOL examined whether it could financially afford to remain independent and hire the necessary staff in order to support it in fulfilling its mission to protect the public. After examining this possibility, the BOL concluded that imposing exorbitant fees on its licensees in order to generate the funds necessary to hire adequate staff was not reasonable, and that the merger of the boards would leverage staff and resources of BOLIM, which includes an Executive Director who is ultimately responsible for overseeing the program of a merged board. At present, BOL is the only osteopathic licensing

Board in the United States without an executive-level director, which will be solved by LD2233. In addition, with the merger the BOL will have the resources that it needs to fulfill its mission to protect the public without having to overburden licensees with excessive licensing fees.

Following all of the merger workgroup meetings and multiple boards discussions, the BOL voted unanimously to recommend the merger of the medical licensing boards in accordance with the provisions outlined in LD2233. LD2233 structures a merged board by combining the current membership of both BOL and BOLIM to create a larger pool of individuals to accomplish the work of protecting the public. Today, osteopathic and allopathic physicians work side-by-side in all types of practice settings. It is time for osteopathic and allopathic physicians to work side-by-side on a merged board – the Maine Board of Medicine.

To our osteopathic colleagues who fear the loss of autonomy and identity from this merger: the BOL is fully aware of those concerns – and shares them. Which is why this merged board is structured to: provide for an equal number of osteopathic and allopathic physicians; creates committees to include osteopathic physicians who review complaints against osteopathic physicians; and does not change the criteria for licensing osteopathic physicians. The BOL heard your concerns and recognized them as valid. The BOL hopes that you will likewise hear and recognize that the merger of the boards is in the best interests of the public.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments regarding LD 2233. I would be happy to answer questions now or at the work session.


