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Senator, District 30

THE MAINE SENATE
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Testimony in support of LD 1357, “An Act To Require Private Insurance Coverage for Postpartum Care”

Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

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Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler and honorable colleagues of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, I am Senator Stacy Brenner and I represent Senate District 30, which includes Gorham, most of Scarborough and part of Buxton. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 1357, “An Act To Require Private Insurance Coverage for Postpartum Care.”

As a nurse-midwife, being present at a birth was the highlight of my journey with a family, with a woman, as she became a mother, sometimes for the first time, some for the third. But what I enjoyed more than anything as a provider were the postpartum visits. These visits were opportunities to process the labor and birth, explore the new mother role, and set the trusting basis for ongoing well woman health care.

The postpartum period is a particularly vulnerable time for new mothers, both for themselves and their child, as they learn to navigate parenthood and all that comes with it. Between the lack of sleep, the pediatric visits, the immunization schedule and a plan for how to go back to work and afford childcare, the last thing a new mom is considering is herself. She has embarked on the phase of life which includes knowing selfless love, and for many this means their own health care comes last.

Missing the postpartum follow up visit could mean a missed opportunity for a woman to connect with her nurse-midwife to set up a long term follow up for high blood pressure, diabetes or a debilitating depression. Long term, this can have grave impacts on child development. A well cared for, healthy mother will parent better and arrive each day and night with more agency to care for her family. A woman who misses the opportunity to follow up in that first 2 months under our current model, may very well be lost to care. And these women, in Maine and across the country, are more often than not, Black, Indigenous, Tribal or Latina. Racial and ethnic disparities are magnified in maternal-child health care when women lack access to care.

Environment and Natural Resources Committee, Chair
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Postpartum care plays an invaluable role in the long term health of mothers, their children and their families, and we need to do all we can to ensure every Maine woman has the ability to access it.

I ask that you join me in supporting LD 1357.

Thank you. And Be Well.