



**TESTIMONY OF GLBTQ LEGAL ADVOCATES & DEFENDERS AND
EQUALITYMAINE
LD 1539 – OUGHT TO PASS
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES
May 5, 2021**

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and Members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony at this public hearing. As you know, GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) is a legal rights organization that works throughout New England to create a just society free of discrimination based on gender identity and expression, HIV status, and sexual orientation, and EqualityMaine is Maine’s statewide LGBTQ civil rights organization.

GLAD and EqualityMaine strongly support LD 1539 – An Act to Provide Access to Fertility Care. Health insurance policies in Maine can and should provide coverage for medical interventions comprising fertility diagnostic issues, fertility treatment, and fertility preservation. Providing access to health insurance coverage for fertility care is critical to ensuring Maine people can realize their hopes of building families.

The parent-child relationship is critically important for families and for a stable, thriving society. LGBTQ+ individuals and couples strive to create families just like all other people and, as such, they are adversely impacted by infertility. It is critical that all individuals have affordable access to fertility medical care within the standards of care outlined by the American Society for Reproductive Medicine.

This bill will ensure that more Maine families have access to quality, timely fertility care. Many people need fertility medical care to become parents while others need fertility preservation because they have a medical condition or will be receiving medical treatment that could impact their fertility in the future. Fertility care, without insurance, is very expensive and out of reach for many who simply go without this care due to the cost. For others, they pay for fertility care at the expense of other important financial commitments such as buying a first home or paying off student loan debt. It is sound public policy to help people build their families and allow them to love and nurture our next generations.

Maine has fallen behind other New England on this issue of access to fertility health care and at a time when many are already struggling. Maine and Vermont are the only states in New England that do not require insurance coverage of fertility care. New Hampshire passed a coverage bill in 2019,¹ and fertility care laws in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island have been in

¹ N.H. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 417-G:1.



place for decades and have become part of the fabric of the states' health care systems.² Fertility treatment is a reliable way for people to bring children into their lives when they are otherwise unable to do so. LD 1539 is long overdue for Maine. It will ensure that Maine is addressing the needs of families and not losing these families to neighboring states that provide access to this important coverage.

Fertility care is critical care for so many people, including LGBTQ+ people. This bill takes much-needed steps to require insurers to cover fertility care in a manner that is best practice and that will support Maine people in building their families. Thank you for your time and consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or for additional information.

Sincerely yours,

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² See Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 38a-509, 536 (1989, 2005); Mass. G. L. c. 175, § 47H, c. 176A, § 8K, c. 176B, § 4J, c. 176G, § 4; 211 Code of Massachusetts Regulations 37.00 (1987, 2010); R.I. Gen. Laws § 27-18-30, § 27-19-23, § 27-20-20, § 27-41-33 (1989, 2007).