

May 3, 2021

Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

c/o Legislative Information Office

100 State House Station

Augusta, ME 04333

Re: LD1539, An Act to Provide Access to Fertility Care

Dear Senator Heather Sanborn, Representative Denise Tepler, and members of the HCIFS Committee:

I am telling you my story because it is a story you would never know if you ever met me. I am the mother of two amazing children, ages 12 and 9, a boy and a girl. I am also a physician, an obstetrician-gynecologist who has worked in Portland for the past 5 years.

My husband and I got married when we were 25. We didn't want to have kids at first because I was a second year medical student in Connecticut at the time, at the beginning of my education in medicine and biomedical research. I studied hard in school and graduated with both an MD and a PhD after 9 years. During those years, I was diagnosed with unexplained infertility – it's a diagnosis of exclusion, meaning, none of the testing showed that anything was wrong. I then took a year off following my education to focus on getting pregnant, but it didn't work out. After that, I started residency in Ob/Gyn in Massachusetts and started undergoing treatments for infertility. I went through multiple cycles of clomid and intrauterine insemination followed by multiple rounds with injectable hormones, none of which worked. Finally, I was switched to in vitro fertilization (IVF). It took multiple rounds of IVF since I was advancing in age and my egg quality was deteriorating, but I delivered my healthy son after 7 years of trying at age 39. I had also completed my residency and was employed as an attending physician at a hospital in Massachusetts. I then did it all again. I lost track of how many IVF cycles my daughter took, but it was worth every injection, every procedure, and every minute. I had run out of insurance coverage but elected to continue paying out-of-pocket. My daughter is priceless. She is now 9 years old, and we live in Maine.

I worry about my daughter and every other Maine person who wishes to conceive who does not have access to what I had access to during my life. My story is one of perseverance, determination, and hard work. It is a story that doesn't happen in Maine. I was fortunate to live in Connecticut and work in Massachusetts where insurance covers infertility treatment. My family exists because of bills like LD1539, An Act to Provide Access to Fertility Care, and it is heartbreaking to me, as a mother and as an obstetrician-gynecologist, to be unable to provide infertility care to women in Maine because they lack what I had only because I lived in a different state: access to health insurance. Please support LD1539, An Act to Provide Access to

Fertility Care, to help every person in Maine suffering from infertility to have the opportunity to have a family of their own, like I did.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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