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This testimony is in support of LD 1357, An Act To Require Private Insurance Coverage for Postpartum Care.

As I looked at my phone for the first time since being discharge from the hospital, I saw so many texts with the message "Congratulations." The tears were streaming down my face as I realized I couldn't bring myself to reply to a single one. A close friend, surprised to have not heard from me post my husband's message that both baby and I were healthy had written a follow up text that said, "It's OK if you aren't OK." To her I wrote back, "I feel so broken. My body is broken." It was not the postpartum I imagined.

As a healthcare provider I have seen many patients through their pregnancies and because of that I felt prepared when it came to having my first child, but the reality of postpartum recovery was vastly different from what I anticipated. While we talk about the pain of labor--and how to get through it--we do not discuss postpartum recovery in a way that prepares us for what is to come. And while labor is witnessed and guided by a skilled team of support, postpartum recovery happens alone, at home, without a team on call who know what to look for and how to help. It puts an incredible amount of pressure on the new family to navigate the vast physical and emotional challenges of healing from birth alone.

Every recovery is different, but pain, incontinence, sleep deprivation, depression, anxiety, limited mobility, and stress are routine. Many of these issues respond better to quick intervention but when you are caring for a new baby full time there isn't brain space to think about finding a care team for yourself or navigating how to pay for that care. If this bill passes it would allow the wonderful providers in Maine to provide the skilled care and support that postpartum families are currently not receiving.

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