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Distinguished Members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee:

My name is Gregory Biron, and I am one of the chief residents in oral and maxillofacial surgery at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) in Pittsburgh, PA. I am writing in support of LD 1629 which will help ensure that surgeons with training like mine can attain medical licensure in the state of Maine.

My co-chief resident, Kristopher Cooper, grew up in Maine and I grew up in New Hampshire. Kristopher and I actually met in dental school at the University of Connecticut, and both matched at UPMC for our Oral and Maxillofacial residency. This is a very competitive program, and we were extremely fortunate to both earn a spot here—we filled the only 2 available spots. Over the past 6 years, he and I have endured a rigorous schedule that has involved over 30 months of oral and maxillofacial surgery service, 5 months of dedicated hospital-based anesthesia training, 12 months of general surgery service, and extended experiences with critical care medicine, head and neck oncology, and perioperative medicine. At UPMC we complete our medical school requirements during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year of residency while simultaneously functioning as residents in the hospital – it is an incredibly difficult schedule but the medical education and surgical patient care experience here is unparalleled.

While it has been a very long journey to get to this point, I am relieved to finally be entering into practice this July and looking forward to taking care of patients in the Northeast. My practice is located in Portsmouth, NH. I was surprised to hear that my co-chief Kristopher ran into trouble with his medical license application in Maine – even though UPMC provides 24 months of ACGME accredited training, and the full 72 months is accredited by CODA. This is why the UPMC Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery residency has been known as a top tier program.

How is it that someone with identical training as myself would not be eligible for the same license just a few miles down the road? I understand that these laws vary by state, but Maine truly seems to stand alone when it comes to the treatment of our profession. There are a few other states (such as NJ and CA) that require 36 months of ACGME accredited training, but I know of several recent graduates from our program who are licensed in those states without issue – our 6-year CODA/ACGME-accredited residency fulfills their requirements.

For the sake of our profession, and more importantly for the sake of patients in the great state of Maine – please recommend passage of LD 1629. Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons are an integral part of the healthcare community, and your citizens deserve access to our services just as much as citizens of any other state.



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