



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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*Testimony of Rep. Tavis Hasenfus introducing*  
**LD 1629, An Act Regarding the Qualifications for Licensure as a Physician or Surgeon**

*Before the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee*

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler and distinguished members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee. My name is Tavis Hasenfus, and I represent House District 81 and the communities of Readfield, Winthrop and part of Monmouth. I am here before you today to present **LD 1629, An Act Regarding the Qualifications for Licensure as a Physician or Surgeon**.

The need for LD 1629 was brought to my attention when a former high school and college classmate of mine, after 14 years of schooling applied for licensure before the Maine Board of Medicine, and was told that under Maine law he was not eligible for licensure as an MD. Dr. Cooper is just finishing up his final year of a six-year surgery program. His post high school education consisted of the University of Maine Orono, where he graduated valedictorian. He then went to UCONN Dental, one of the most prestigious dental schools in the US, where he obtained a D.M.D. After graduating dental school, he attended Pittsburgh to become dually trained as an Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon (OMS) and M.D. Just this year he finished his last year of his six-year program.

After his arduous fourteen-year journey, Dr. Cooper was thrilled to finally be returning to his and his wife's home state for a long and productive career serving Maine patients. Dr. Cooper is that young Mainer that our state is desperately trying to retain. However, after applying to Maine's medical licensing board, Dr. Cooper was quickly told that, even though he had completed 72 months of resident surgery training, because his program did not offer three years of post-graduate ACGME surgery training that he would not be able to be licensed as an M.D. in his home state. As is written in the testimony submitted by the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons:

"The University of Pittsburgh issued his medical degree after 48-months of training, and he went on to complete a further 24-months of integrated dental/medical training after

receipt of this degree. The Board of Medical Licensure states that because Dr. Cooper's medical degree was issued in year four of his program, the state does not recognize that he has completed 72 months of post-graduate training. Rather, the state only recognizes 24-months, which does not meet the 36-month requirement stipulated in M.R.S.A. tit. 32, § 3271."

The training Dr. Cooper received through his program at Pittsburgh is indistinguishable from other programs of its kind. The mere fact of when the school issues the degree in relation to its residency requirements is not an indicator of performance. As lawmakers, we should ask ourselves if it is good policy to prohibit Dr. Cooper and his colleagues from working in Maine.

Licensure is designed to protect the public by establishing minimum proficiency standards within a profession. This bill is not asking for any of these standards to be lowered, as we should require high standards for all medical professionals in Maine. It is merely asking that Maine recognize the reality of the specific training regiments at ALL OMS/MD programs. There are a handful of other states in the US that require more than 24 months of surgical training post degree. All of these states have a carve out for OMS/ MD programs. LD 1629 is simply asking that Maine adopt a similar exception for these specialized doctors, who have completed more schooling than almost any other profession.

In closing, there is a hole in Maine's current licensure statute for surgeons like Dr. Cooper. Maine should amend its current statute relating to licensing of M.D.s to allow surgeons who have completed the rigorous training involved in an OMS/ MD program to obtain licensure as both an OMS and an MD. This will in no way reduce the education requirements imposed on an M.D., but it will greatly increase the likelihood of Maine attracting more of these specialized surgeons to our state. I respectfully ask this committee to vote in favor of LD 1629.