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STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



HEATHER JOHNSON
COMMISSIONER

Testimony Of: Kate Foye
In support of LD 149
An Act to Facilitate Licensure for Credentialed Individuals from Other Jurisdictions

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts and members of the IDEA Committee, my name is Kate Foye and I am the Legislative Liaison for the Department of Economic and Community Development.

The Department of Economic and Community Development supports LD149, "An Act to Facilitate Licensure for Credentialed Individuals from Other Jurisdictions" as a critical step in the journey towards achieving one of the three key goals of the 10-Year Statewide Economic Development Strategy, "Attract 75,000 people to Maine's talent pool." In this case, we have the talent here in Maine in the form of highly trained, foreign-credentialed individuals who are unable to pursue the highest and best use of the skills, training and intellect.

The 10-Year Plan identifies seven strategy areas, including "Attract New Talent." Under this strategy, the Plan recommends an action step to "Help New Americans and other newcomers get qualified to work in Maine." LD149, a key recommendation coming from the Working Group to Study Barriers to Credentialing report provided to the legislature from the Commissioner of the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation, is a critical foundational step.

The Department of Financial and Professional Regulation Commissioner's report, delivered in March 2020 immediately prior to pandemic shut-down, "identifies some actions that can be taken to simplify Maine's licensing processes for the foreign-credentialed and skilled and for out-of-state license holders." It notes that "while considering reducing or removing barriers to licensure, it is important to be careful not to dilute or lower the proficiency standards themselves. Striking the right balance between protecting consumers and promoting workforce expansion and economic growth is ultimately a public policy decision for state policy makers." The report goes on to recommend the statutory amendments including:

- "i. Define "jurisdiction" in Title 10 to include U.S. states, U.S. territories and other countries.
- ii. Grant authority to Director of OPOR to waive certain licensing requirements, including documentation requirements and license fees, provided any such waivers do not dilute or lower the requisite standards of proficiency. The waiver authority should be accompanied by technical rulemaking authority to establish criteria for granting a waiver.
- iii. Provide Director of OPOR and OPOR licensing boards authority to establish limited duration, limited scope "provisional" licenses for foreign educated/trained/skilled applicants."

LD149 makes good on these recommendations and DECD sees this legislation as a key first step to welcoming much needed talent into our workforce and a foundational action in the implementation of the 10-Year Strategic Plan.