



LD 1436 An Act To Protect Certain Essential Workers from Infectious Disease
Testimony in Opposition
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Northern Light Health
Government Relations
43 Whiting Hill Road
Brewer, Maine 04412

Office 207-861-3282
Fax 207-872-2030

Northern Light Health

Acadia Hospital
A.R. Gould Hospital
Beacon Health
Blue Hill Hospital
C.A. Dean Hospital
Eastern Maine Medical Center
Home Care & Hospice
Inland Hospital
Maine Coast Hospital
Mercy Hospital
Northern Light Health Foundation
Sebasticook Valley Hospital

Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester and members of the Labor Committee, my name is Lisa Harvey-McPherson RN, I am here today providing testimony on behalf of Northern Light Health and our member organizations speaking in opposition to this bill. Northern Light Health member organizations include 10 hospitals located in southern, central, eastern and northern Maine, 8 nursing facilities, air and ground ambulance, behavioral health, addiction treatment, pharmacy, primary and specialty care practices and a state-wide home care and hospice program. Ninety three percent of Maine's population lives in the Northern Light Health service area. Northern Light Health is also proud to be one of Maine's largest employers with over 12,000 employees statewide.

I want to begin my testimony by expressing appreciation for the truly outstanding work of the Northern Light Health materials management team for their heroic work to provide our employees with personal protective equipment (PPE) during the COVID-19 pandemic. This group of talented and dedicated individuals protected our clinicians and patients each and every day and their success continues as we work to provide everyone in Maine with COVID-19 vaccine. We are all genuinely grateful that we had sufficient protective equipment for our patient care needs throughout the pandemic. Northern Light Health also supported many nursing facilities with PPE during over the past year when their demand exceeded supplies available for their staff.

The national supply chain for PPE was challenged before COVID-19 and the pandemic made clear the impact supply and distribution difficulties have on health care providers. Prior to COVID-19 we experienced a national recall on protective gowns, today we continue to experience supply disruptions largely related to availability of raw materials for manufacturers. Last spring masks were in such short supply that a local business, Ntension in Bangor, retooled their business model to become our major supplier of masks. They continue as our major supplier of masks and we will be forever grateful to them.

This bill presumes that protective supply orders placed by employers will be filled without disruption to accumulate 3-month stockpile for every employer mandated in the bill. As noted supply chain disruptions continue to this day with no final resolution in sight. Creating artificial demand will further exacerbate the supply chain challenges that continue to exist and place every employer in a position to violate the law.

That said establishing standards to ensure that Maine has a sufficient stock of PPE is a reasonable policy goal. We recommend that this bill be amended to direct the Maine Emergency Management Agency be charged with accumulating a sufficient stockpile of PPE that can then be distributed to employers when they are in need of additional PPE to

meet patient care and essential employee protection needs. This is their role and responsibility.

Thank you .