TO: Committee on Labor and Housing
FR: Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce

RE: Opposition to LD 1639 **"An Act to Address Unsafe Staffing of Nurses and Improve Patient Care"**

On behalf of the Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors I am writing to share our position on LD 1639 which would impose strict nurse staffing ratios through statute in all hospitals in the state. A bill we strongly oppose.

The Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce represents nearly 800 businesses in the 21 communities we serve. The healthcare sector is a large part of our region's economy, bringing in workers and individuals needing healthcare services from throughout our region and well beyond.

Several of Maine's largest healthcare organizations and hospitals are based in Bangor and as members of our chamber, we know first hand the contributions these institutions make to our region beyond the quality healthcare services they provide. They employ thousands of our residents, provide opportunities for new graduates from our educational institutions, attract new individuals and families to our region from across the globe, thereby strengthening our neighborhoods, schools and economy.

While this bill may be a well intended effort to improve patient care, the staggering cost that hospitals would have to incur to comply with the mandated ratios could in fact have the reverse effect as hospitals may have no other choice than to reduce the number of beds available for patients. Imagine what that would mean for a patient traveling from Calais to Bangor for treatment, only to not have a bed available for admission.

Access to quality healthcare is critical to our region's quality of life and the ability of employers to attract individuals and families to come here to live, work and contribute their talents. We urge you to protect the state's health care system and its patients from the consequences of this rigid, costly mandate.

Please oppose LD 1639.

Thank you for your consideration,

Deb Neuman, President & CEO
Cc: Jaclyn Fish, Chair of the Board