



**Testimony of the Maine Public Health Association in Support of
LD 1010, An Act To Establish the Maine Service Fellows Program**

Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government
Room 216, Cross State Office Building
Wednesday, April 7, 2021

Good morning Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government. My name is Rebecca Boulos. I am a resident of South Portland and executive director of Maine Public Health Association. I am here today to present testimony in support of LD 1010, "An Act To Establish the Maine Service Fellows Program."

MPHA is the state's oldest, largest, and most diverse association for public health professionals. We represent more than 500 individual members and 30 organizations across the state. The mission of MPHA is to improve and sustain the health and well-being of all people in Maine through health promotion, disease prevention, and the advancement of health equity. As a statewide nonprofit association, we advocate, act, and advise on critical public health challenges, aiming to improve the policies, systems, and environments that underlie health inequities - but which also have potential to improve health outcomes for all people in Maine. We are not tied to a national agenda, which means we are responsive to the needs of Maine's communities.

This bill establishes the Maine Service Fellows Program under the Maine Commission for Community Service.

We believe the provisions in this bill will positively contribute to the growth and development of Maine's public health workforce by attracting public service-minded professionals who care about the health of Maine's people and environments. With potential project areas addressing un- or under-met critical health and human, public safety, education, and environmental needs, and a focus on underserved communities that are disproportionately impacted by health disparities, we believe we will see improved health and health outcomes in these areas. We are also hopeful this program will help to retain and attract young people to Maine, introduce them to the various fields in public health, and reverse the "brain drain" trend we have seen in recent years.

This is a promising and worthwhile investment in Maine's public health workforce. On behalf of MPHA, I respectfully ask you to vote LD 1010 "Ought to Pass." Thank you for your consideration.