

April 7, 2019

Subject: Testimony in favor of LD 364

"An Act To Establish the Right To Practice Complementary and Alternative Health Care Act"

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and Members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services,

My name is Kelly Callahan, I live in Appleton, Maine.

I have been a homeopathic practitioner since 2011, in private practice serving citizens of Maine.

I am certified by the Council for Homeopathic Certification and a registered member of the North American Society of Homeopaths. I am on the faculty of two professional homeopathic schools: the Baylight Center for Homeopathy in Portland, Maine, and the Academy for Homeopathy Education, based in Philadelphia. Since January, I have also been a member of the steering committee for LD 364.

I didn't dream of being a homeopath when I was young. I didn't know what it was.

I did dream about living lightly on the earth and of making a difference in people's lives.

Looking back, underlying that dream is a commitment to personal autonomy, a trust in myself and knowing what I need, and a desire to do-it-myself when I can.

For health and wellness, this emerged first as an interest in herbalism along with my natural history studies in college. It led naturally to a home birth for my children. In seeking the best options to support their immune systems and overall development, I found homeopathy.

When my son was born with the cord around his neck and after receiving oxygen would not stop screaming. **The midwife gave him a homeopathic remedy for shock. Within seconds my son stopped screaming and looked into my eyes for the first time.** I have carried that powerful moment with me in everything I do.

It propelled me to learn more about this gentle modality and how it could support my family. Like thousands of other mothers, I'm always looking for the best supports for my children.

I found it in homeopathy, and throughout their young lives, we have avoided emergency rooms, antibiotics, over the counter medicines (many later recalled), and stronger interventions.

We didn't avoid these standard medical practices because they don't work. **We made another choice because we can**, because there *are* other options out there that are more aligned with our values. **Effective, natural, cost effective modalities.**

As a professional homeopath, I serve families who are also making a choice that aligns with their values. I also serve individuals who have **not found the relief** they are seeking elsewhere. People who **need additional support** and healing alongside their conventional treatment. I have worked with people who are in pain and do not feel well, yet their **doctor cannot find a diagnosis** for them. It's not the doctor's fault. There are different systems of medicine and healing, and each one brings its own perspective on health, disease and healing, with its own remedies. No one approach does it all.

One is not better than the other, though people do deserve the right to choose the options that are the best for them, at any given time. This is not either/or, but 'this *and* this.'

LD 364 "An Act To Establish the Right To Practice Complementary and Alternative Health Care Act" ensures that right for consumers.

In talking to many of you on the committee about the bill, I have been told that these healing modalities are new to you. You may not be familiar with them, or have only heard of one or two of them.

That doesn't matter.

What DOES matter is that thousands of Mainers *have* heard of the one or three that they need, have needed, and may need in the future to ease pain, overcome a chronic illness, finally beat Lyme disease, master their addiction, ease their grief, or meet any one of the thousands of needs we have as humans.

LD 364 is coined 'Safe Harbor Legislation' because it creates a safe harbor- for people who need relief, and for practitioners who can offer it. **Maine has a thriving wellness community that has built up over generations. From Aroostook County to Kittery, you can find dedicated, professional, compassionate practitioners offering safe modalities from energy work to herbal support.**

As a practitioner, I am part of the small business economy of Maine. Though I am an individual in private practice, I am also a thread in an essential web in our communities.

We are a quiet web, because as you now know, our work is not legally recognized. Despite this and the potential for being accused of practicing medicine without a license, we carry on offering safe harbor for those in pain, who need it and choose it.

Despite this we contribute to the economy by offering small classes and workshops offering people the tools to help themselves and live healthier, happier lives.

We pay taxes and join associations and the Chambers of Commerce.

And yet also despite this, we keep a low profile. We may not reach as many people as would benefit or choose our services because we are aware of the nebulous area we inhabit as unlicensed practitioners.

I respectfully urge you to support Maine's complementary and alternative health care practitioners and the citizens who choose them.

Please vote in support of LD 364, in support of choice, in support of compassionate practitioners providing a vital need.

Sincerely,

Kelly Callahan