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Testimony of the Maine Osteopathic Association
Before the Health and Human Services Committee

In Reference to:

LD 1270, An Act Regarding Patient-Directed Care at the End of Life

Public Hearing: May 15, 2015 at 9:30 am, Room 209 Cross Office Building

Good morning Senator Brakey, Representative Gattine, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Angela Westhoff and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Osteopathic Association.

The Maine Osteopathic Association is a professional organization representing approximately 400 osteopathic physicians and an additional 500 residents and students. Our mission is to “serve the Osteopathic profession of the State of Maine through a coordinated effort of professional education, professional advocacy and member services in order to ensure the availability of quality osteopathic health care to the people of this State.”

The MOA is here today to submit testimony in opposition to **LD 1270, An Act Regarding Patient-Directed Care at the End of Life**. The MOA is a strong believer in palliative care and quality end of life care for all patients. We recognize the complex physical, mental and emotional needs of our patients at their end of life journey. We fully support the effective management of pain so that individuals may be comfortable as they complete the dying process.

However, the MOA strongly rejects the notion of physician-assisted suicide and that is essentially what LD 1270 is attempting to do. The bill, as it stands now, is confusing. We all want quality end-of-life care for our loved ones and to have patient-driven and participatory planning in that process. However, to say that patient centered care includes physician-assisted suicide is inappropriate. It is also very dangerous public policy. End of life issues are complex. They require education and outreach as part of a broad public awareness campaign/ education. We already have very good palliative care providers in Maine that patients can access and this bill does not address the bigger policy issues of advance care planning.

It is for these reasons the MOA opposes LD 1270. Thank you for your time and attention and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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