

14 March 2017

Dear Senator Volk, Representative Fecteau, and the members of the Labor, Commerce, Research, and Economic Development Committee,

I am a Family Physician practicing in Skowhegan, and I am writing in support of LD503, An Act to Continue the Doctors for Maine's Future Scholarship Program. I am a former Doctors for Maine's Future scholar, and graduated from the Tufts University Maine Track program in 2013. Doctors for Maine's Future provided scholarships for half of my medical school tuition, and is a critical program for aspiring young doctors from Maine.

There is no state medical school in Maine, an opportunity that does exist for residents of most other states. The Doctors for Maine's Future program provides necessary financial support for students from Maine to attend medical school at a more affordable rate, and even to train in our home state through Tufts or the University of New England.

From the time I was young I knew I wanted to become a doctor and to practice Family Medicine. I attended public school in the Cranberry Isles and at Mount Desert Island High school, went to college out of state, and then enrolled in the Tufts Maine Track program after returning home for a year to work aboard my father's lobster boat. I graduated from medical school with a student debt burden nearing \$160,000. Imagine graduating with nearly twice that level of debt if it hadn't been for this program! We know that high student debt impacts medical students' choices of specialty and location of practice. We need more primary care in our rural areas, and students with high debt burdens can be more likely to specialize, thereby limiting practice options to larger cities.

I grew up in rural Maine, and returned to rural Maine to practice Family Medicine. I hope that you will vote to continue the Doctors for Maine's Future program so that students and physicians like me may have opportunities to train and practice in the home state that we love, and so that our patients and fellow citizens may benefit.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Marya R. Goettsche Spurling, MD

Skowhegan Family Medicine
46 Fairview Ave.
Skowhegan, ME 04976