

The Maine Heritage Policy Center Testimony to Support LD 1746

“An Act To Amend the Licensing Laws of Certain Professions and Occupations”

Senator Herbig, Representative Daughtry and distinguished members of the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business, my name is Adam Crepeau and I am a policy analyst at The Maine Heritage Policy Center. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 1746.

The Maine Heritage Policy Center supports LD 1746 because it would ease some of the licensing requirements in certain occupations in the state of Maine. First and foremost, this bill would give the Director of the Office of Professional and Occupational Regulation the authority to reduce license fees. Most individuals that want a license to practice their profession must pay a fee, or several fees, to obtain it. For example, dietetic technicians, who are governed by the Office of Professional and Occupational Regulation, are required to pay a \$150 fee to obtain a license.¹ These fees are a barrier to entry, especially when combined with education, examination and hours requirements. The Maine Heritage Policy Center believes an individual should be able to practice in their field without obtaining a permission slip from state government, except in occupations that pose legitimate risks to the health and safety of the general public.

In addition, this bill increases the number of helper electricians that may be supervised by master, journeymen or limited electricians at one time from one to two. This change would likely have a positive effect in addressing Maine’s electrician shortage. There are currently over 6,500 actively licensed master, journeyman, and limited electricians in Maine and this bill could effectively double the number of helper electricians that would be able to practice in Maine at one time.² The state of Maine has over 350 electrician openings annually, and this bill will help in filling the void. What purpose does the limit serve aside from arbitrarily capping the number of individuals that may enter a profession at one time? It should be noted that Maine is one of two states that licenses electrical helpers in the first place, calling into question the necessity of this license.³

Further, this bill repeals the education requirements to become a physical therapist and physical

¹ <https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/02/041/041c010.doc>

² Actively licensed electricians in Maine (6,643 actively licensed master, journeyman and limited electricians).
<https://www.pfr.maine.gov/ALMSOnline/ALMSQuery/SearchResults.aspx>

³ <https://ij.org/report/license-work-2/ltw-occupation-profiles/ltw2-electrical-helper/>

therapist assistant, and changes the requirements to get a real estate appraiser license. If this bill passes, applicants to become a certified residential real property appraiser or licensed residential real property appraiser would be subject to less stringent education and hours requirements to obtain a license or certification. For example, applicants vying to become a certified residential real property appraiser currently need a bachelor's degree and this bill would give applicants a wider variety of options, such as obtaining an associate's degree or completing 30 hours of college-level coursework.⁴

Lastly, this bill would codify current departmental rules that exempt temporary licenses for speech-language pathologists, speech-language pathology assistants and trainee hearing aid dealers and fitters from continuing professional education requirements when they renew their licenses.⁵ Oftentimes, continuing education requirements serve as another burden for individuals to renew their licenses. The Maine Heritage Policy Center believes this bill doesn't go far enough and should exclude speech-language pathologists and audiologists from continuing professional education requirements as well - they currently have to demonstrate that they are receiving continuing professional education that directly relates to their profession.⁶ If an individual is already a master in their field or has ample experience to perform their day-to-day duties, there is no need for them to receive continuing professional education.

Because this bill would ease licensing requirements in some professions and may reduce licensing fees in Maine, The Maine Heritage Policy Center urges the committee to vote, "Ought to Pass" on LD 1746. Thank you.

⁴ <https://appraisalfoundation.sharefile.com/share/view/scbea7640298440aa>

⁵ <https://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/02/643/643-all-2011.doc>

⁶ Ibid.