

April 4, 2019

Re: Testimony in **Support of LD 364: "An Act To Establish the Right To Practice Complementary and Alternative Health Care"**

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

My name is Michelle Draghetti. I live in Kennebunkport with my husband, who is a physician, and my two sons, who are 10 and 13 years old.

I, like many parents, am the mother of an autistic child. From a very early age, my son was quite disengaged from the world around him, except when he was overwhelmed by it. He suffered from sensory overload and spent a lot of time under desks and tables. He often spoke in echolalia repeating phrases from movies and books rather than speaking independently. He didn't look us in the eye, and was terrified by ordinary things like people in child-friendly costumes, his own reflection, and climbing up onto even the smallest of children's playground equipment. He would sometimes have nervous convulsions and had a very hard time with separation from me. He did not play with other children but engaged in parallel play. Doctors did not have much to offer, so we sought out physical, behavioral and occupational therapies, which did help to some degree.

One day, a random encounter with another parent of an autistic child introduced me to the healing art of homeopathy. My son began treatment at the age of 4 or 5 and I saw immediate improvement. Over the years, we have had a number of homeopathic remedies that have helped him become much more socially aware, capable of handling every day sensory input and able to form lasting friendships.

One day, my then 7-year-old son was sitting in my lap – something he had not been able to do in the past because he could not tolerate all that touching. He turned to me and said, *"Mommy, are you giving me LoveHearts?"* Sure enough, there was some type of unique energy flow happening between us, and as I learned more about energy work, I found that what we were sharing was an energetic healing practice called "Attunement". Since then, Attunement has become an important part of my family's health and wellness routine, and is one of the few things that can soothe my son when he is particularly anxious.

All of the alternative and holistic practitioners we have worked with have been knowledgeable, well-trained and completely professional. My husband is a physician, and we have always woven alternative health care practices such as homeopathy, attunement, Reiki, cranio-sacral therapy and nutritional supplementation in with traditional medicine. This has been the very best – really *only* – way we have been able to help our autistic son. Today he is a bright, happy, communicative child attending Middle School. He still struggles with anxiety and OCD, and so we continue to work with all modalities and practitioners.

I'm respectfully asking you to support Maine's complementary and alternative health care practitioners / health care consumers so that we may continue to seek out these therapies for our son and hope that they will be able to help many other families struggling with the challenges of autism. Please vote YES for LD 364.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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