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Testimony Before the Joint Standing Committee  
on Health & Human Services  
On LD 996 An Act to Improve Dental Health  
Access for Maine Children and Adults With Low  
Incomes

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and Honorable Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Patty Kidder and I live in the village of Springvale located in the city, Sanford. I submit these remarks as a representative of the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network, a faith based organization which affirms and promotes justice, equity and compassion in human relations, and the inherent worth and dignity of every person. My faith motivates me to speak in favor of LD 996 – An Act To Improve Dental Health Access for Maine Children and Adults with Low Incomes.

Also, I am a low income adult who would have benefited greatly had this law been enacted years ago. I could have received the preventative dental care that could have saved my back teeth. Instead they became infected, full of decay and had to be removed. Now that I have only one molar, it is very difficult for me to chew my food with only my front teeth. I bite the inside of my mouth on a regular basis when I eat because my bite doesn't line up any more. I need to have either partial or full dentures which I can't afford, but this bill would provide.

I am here to give a voice to my other low income friends who need MaineCare to cover their dental health care. We all need to have a healthy smile. We need to keep our mouth healthy because it can affect the rest of our body. I heard that having a regular dental exam can even identify other medical issues that could go undetected for years. Having poor dental health can even cause depression and anxiety and it makes it harder to get a living wage job. You can't prove discrimination but people judge you when you have poor dental health.

You can help low income Mainers prevent tooth decay and losing their teeth prematurely like I did. As a person of faith and someone who needs the dental care this bill would provide, I urge you to please support LD 996 and provide full dental care to low income Maine children and adults.

Thank you for your time