

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services: my name is Patty Kidder and I live in Springvale, located in the City of Sanford.

I am a long-time active member of the Sanford Unitarian Universalist Church, MUUSAN (Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network) and Maine People's Alliance (MPA). Unitarian Universalists (UUs) believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every human being and in justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. Because of my strong belief in these basic principles, I believe health care is a human right and we need to do whatever we can to ensure all Mainers have access to health care.

I am asking you to please support and fund Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross' bill, LD 199, "An Act To Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Closing Coverage Gaps in MaineCare and the Children's Health Insurance Program". I have seen how having MaineCare health insurance saved the life of my childhood sweetheart. He qualified for and received MaineCare immediately after Governor Janet Mills signed Medicaid Expansion into Law. Soon afterwards he was diagnosed with cancer. He was able to access the health care he needed to survive and recover. He is now cancer free but how many people are waiting for you to give them the health insurance they need? How many have suffered needlessly because of the coverage gaps in both MaineCare and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)? Access to affordable health care saves lives and making it available to all Maine residents, regardless of their immigration status, is the right thing to do.

Maine has a shortage of affordable daycare, preschools and care-givers of all kinds and most of the people willing to do this very important work are not even making a living wage. My daughter and her friends have had to put money down to put their child or children on a waiting list for a year before getting a spot in a quality daycare. I know people who qualified for in-home personal care but there were no workers to provide the care. I even know one who died waiting and I believe the low wages are contributing to the shortage of care-givers of all kinds.

I am asking you to please support legislation that invests in Maine's Care Economy. One way is to support legislation this session that would double the allocation of the child care educator salary supplement. Please support an increased investment and continue to make improvements on behalf of the child care workforce to help fully staff child care programs.

Thank you for your time.

Patricia E. Kidder
4 Carpenter Street
Springvale, ME 04083-1109

207-977-3325