

John Flaherty-Stanford  
Portland  
LD 199

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services: my name is John Flaherty-Stanford, I live in Portland, and I am a small business owner.

I am here today to testify in favor of LD 199.

I emigrated to the United States from the United Kingdom in 2005 to get married, and I became a U.S. citizen in 2015.

I am proud to be American, and my wife and I are proud to be raising our daughter in Maine. But, as an immigrant, I am not proud of our state's treatment of many of our friends, family members and neighbors who are also immigrants, when it comes to access to MaineCare.

All of us, no matter who we are or where we come from - have a right to decent, affordable health care. But many Mainers are excluded from MaineCare simply because of their immigration status.

MaineCare is designed to make sure that all of us have access to health care. That should mean all of us, without exceptions and exclusions. It is simply wrong and inhumane to deny someone health care because of immigration status.

Mainers who have come here from other countries are essential members of our communities – regardless of their immigration status. They are taxpayers who contribute to our system; and they are workers in our state's essential industries.

Passing LD 199 will correct a wrong that is keeping thousands of Mainers from caring for themselves and their families, and it is the right thing to do not just for those who will benefit from it but for all Mainers. Thank you for your time.