

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on 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.

Another dear disabled friend found herself needing a liver transplant because of having Hepatitis C from a blood transfusion when her son was born before

screening blood was routine. It was undiagnosed for 30+ years and the damage was done to her liver. The specialist wouldn't even consider her for a transplant until she had health insurance. Fortunately I was able to help her get the insurance she needed so desperately through the ACA Marketplace in time to get the surgery she needed to survive. She recently had her 4<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of her transplant and she is doing great enjoying her life. Without health insurance, she would have died in the fall of 2018.

People's lives are in your hands so I am asking you to please support LD 199, "An Act To Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Closing Coverage Gaps in MaineCare and the Children's Health Insurance Program". Please vote "Ought to Pass" and know that you will be saving lives and it is the right thing to do.

Thank you for your time and I will do my best to answer any questions.

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