

Vanuza Rogers  
South Portland  
LD 199

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Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and honorable members of the Health and Human Services committee: My name is Grace Vanuza Rogers, I live in south Portland and I'm writing today to testify in favor of the LD 199.

When I first started helping families at Howard Johnson as a caseworker and a cultural broker, I noticed that most families seeking asylum do not qualify right away for MaineCare due their immigration status. I consider health care a very fundamental basic need and it is heartbreaking to see so many people being denied the right to have basic health care benefits. As a cultural broker and case manager, I have seen so many of my clients with the fear of going to the emergency room when feeling sick or with a life-threatening disease because of their inability to pay and no health care. A few months ago I was helping a single mother from Guatemala. She was denied MaineCare. Her leg was badly infected and she needed to go to the emergency room. She had no choice but to go. When she got the bill she called me in fear. She knew she couldn't pay the bill. She made the only choice available to her: she needed to keep the infection from getting worse, she needed to keep her leg, she needed to stay healthy to take care of her kids. But she is now burdened with medical debt for years to come. There is a better way than this.

I urge you all to do something important for Maine and for our future today. Please allow this bill to pass. It's not okay to live in fear and not have access to health care.

Thank you  
Grace Vanuza Rogers