

Testimony from Tobin Williamson of the Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition regarding:
LD 2175: An Act to Improve Access to Affordable Prescription Drugs in Underserved Areas

Sponsored By: Senate President Troy Jackson of Aroostook County

Dear Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, and Members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services:

My name is Tobin Williamson and I live in Westbrook. I am the Manager of Advocacy & Policy with the Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition (MIRC), a network of around 100 member organizations working to enhance the lives of Maine's immigrant communities across the state. MIRC works to advance systemic changes in Maine through collaborative advocacy to ensure that voices and perspectives of the state's large, diverse, and growing immigrant communities are heard at the State House in Augusta, in the Halls of Congress in D.C., and in municipalities throughout Maine.

I am writing to you today in support of LD 2175, an Act to Improve Access to Affordable Prescription Drugs in Underserved Areas. The grant program established by this legislation would help Federally Qualified Health Centers increase access to affordable prescription drugs via pharmacy services. Given Maine is such a rural place and many "pharmacy deserts"¹ exist throughout the state, these services are needed in order to increase the ability for people to obtain necessary, affordable medications. In addition to many rural residents, FQHCs also provide essential services to eligible patients in more urbanized areas, as well, including large numbers of Maine's immigrant communities.

According to the Maine Primary Care Association, more than 200,000 Maine residents access these services at Community Health Centers, such as medical, behavioral, and dental care. LD 2175 would work to add certain pharmacy services to this list by providing the health centers funding to develop and/or expand pharmacy services located on site.

We are proud to join our allies at the Maine Primary Care Association and Maine Community Health Center network in supporting this important legislation. To quote MPCA, "We are at a crisis point² and it is essential to provide immediate funding support for FQHCs to develop and expand pharmacy services in Maine." We hope that you will recognize this urgent need and vote to pass LD 2175. Thank you for your consideration.

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¹ <https://themainemonitor.org/help-us-report-on-maine-pharmacies/>

² <https://themainemonitor.org/shortage-of-pharmacists-leaving-customers-in-peril/>