

Kelly Tibbetts  
Lyman  
LD 893

My name is Kelly Tibbetts, and I am a farmer, and the wife of a Maine farmer. For years, I've worked a second job just to secure health insurance for our family, instead of being able to dedicate my time fully to our farm. This juggling act between two jobs has not only been exhausting but has kept me away from the farm where I could be contributing more to our business. Because of me having to step away from the farm, we have had to hire additional employees to meet the needs of our growing business.

LD 896 presents an opportunity for us and so many other farm families like ours. This bill would allow the Maine Farm Bureau to offer affordable health coverage through a partnership with the Tennessee Farm Bureau—coverage that has been helping farmers for 75 years. This could mean the world to families like mine who are struggling to make a living while balancing the high costs of healthcare. I personally believe that the lack of available health coverage is part of the reason why we are seeing the state of Maine's farming community continue to shrink, I believe if we could offer adequate health insurance to farm families, we might be able to see an increase in the number of farms in Maine.

With the passage of this bill, I would have the opportunity to work full-time on the farm, contributing directly to our business and the success of our local agricultural community. We shouldn't have to choose between working two jobs and being there for our families and our farms. LD 896 would allow us to focus on what matters most: supporting our farm, our employees, and our way of life.

I urge the committee to pass this bill so that farm families across Maine can have access to affordable health coverage and the opportunity to work full-time in the field without sacrificing our health or financial stability.

Thank you for your time and consideration.