Jessica Woods
Portland
LD 1688

Hello, Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson and honorable members of the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee. My name is Jessica Woods and I live in Portland. I am writing to testify in favor of LD 1688.

While I do not personally suffer from an infection associated chronic condition, my sister does, and I am writing in support of her. My sister is 34 years old and has been suffering from a variety of symptoms her entire adult life.

Growing up, my sister, my brother, and I excelled in academics, were multi-sport athletes, and participated in numerous school clubs. It was when my sister went to college to pursue a degree in nursing when she started experiencing symptoms. Throughout the 15+ years since, I have watched her push through every health hurdle to try to pursue her dreams of being a nurse, which she was successful in despite her often debilitating symptoms. She has sought help from dozens of doctors from at least 7 different states, done countless hours of research, and advocated hard for herself every step of the way to try to have her providers understand what she is going through.

Unfortunately, after a mild Covid infection in 2022, mere months after finally receiving a diagnosis of myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS), her symptoms became severe enough where she became disabled and was no longer able to work in the career she loved and fought so hard for. Since receiving the right diagnosis, she has been able to discover non-medication tactics to help improve her quality of life. However, she is mostly housebound, can no longer drive, can no longer work, and still has debilitating symptoms every da. For her, it’s always a matter of how bad these symptoms are on any given day, not if she is having them or not.

From where I sit, it has been incredibly difficult to watch my sister have to fight to be heard from her providers, to spend infinite amounts of time dedicated to researching her symptoms, and often times being unbelieved by providers who were not educated on her illnesses, simply chalking them up to anxiety or depression, when that was clearly so far from the truth. LD 1688 is incredibly important so that providers are educated on infection-associated chronic conditions, believe patients like my sister, and can more quickly diagnose patients to avoid potential irreversible damage to their health from not receiving the proper treatment.

I urge you to vote in favor of LD 1688. Thank you for your time.