Good afternoon, Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson and honorable members of the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee. My name is Breeze Odeen, I live in Orland and I am here to testify in favor of LD 1688.

In March of 2020, after flying home to Maine from the west coast, I contracted COVID19. I was quite sick for 3 weeks. It is important to know that I was a healthy, active 40 year old mom of 3 young children when I first got sick. After I recovered from the initial illness, I started experiencing a whole range of mysterious symptoms. These included constantly being out of breath, sharp pains in my chest, new allergic reactions to foods and products, and inability to think clearly-I often couldn't remember words when talking or where I was going when I drove. It was terrifying. I saw my PCP and she told me I needed to rest more. I started experiencing fainting episodes- I would be home standing in my kitchen and my heart rate would start to speed up and then I would faint. I went back to my PCP and described what I was experiencing along with increasingly more difficulty thinking, speaking, and eating. My PCP listened to my heart and took my blood pressure. She told me about how sometimes moms with young children just get overwhelmed and exhausted and that if I could just rest some more I would probably improve. I begged her for a referral to a cardiologist and neurologist. The wait time to get an appointment with either at the time was 9-12 months. As the summer continued, my health decreased rapidly. By fall of 2020, I couldn't get out of my bed. I needed assistance walking to the bathroom. I spent the next 5 months in my bed. My PCP refused to recognize the serious of my illness and did nothing to help me get further help.

I turned to online support groups. I was able to connect with other people who were experiencing similar symptoms following a Covid19 infection.

I called hospitals in Boston myself and was able to get virtual appointments with specialists - a cardiologist, allergist, and neurologist. Eventually I was diagnosed with POTS, dysautonomia, small fiber neuropathy, and mast cell activation syndrome. I had to be driven to Boston for autonomic testing because it isn't offered in Maine.

I found a new local PCP who knew a little about POTS. For the next 4 years, I was effectively my own primary care provider. I did all my own research and contacted specialists to get the help I needed. I felt very alone. It would have made a huge difference if my PCPs had been educated about dysautonomia. It is awful to suddenly be very sick and have your doctor tell you it's because you are too exhausted and stressed. If she had more training, maybe she would have taken my symptoms seriously and helped me get the care I desperately needed.

I urge you to vote in favor of LD 1688.

Thank you for your time.

Breeze Odeen