

Gus Dunn Hindle
Maine People's Alliance
LD 2212

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, Senator Ingwerson, Representative Meyer, and Honorable members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services, My name is Gus Dunn-Hindle, and I am the legislative strategist for Maine People's Alliance, speaking on behalf of our 32,000 members across the state of Maine.

Our mission is to create a world where everyone has what they need, contributes what they can, and no one is left behind.

I am here today to testify neither for nor against LD 2212.

Following federal funding cuts, people's health insurance costs are skyrocketing. According to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), 31,000 Mainers across the state are at risk of losing their healthcare entirely. With less revenue from insurance payments and direct assistance, hospitals and other health care providers are at risk of closing, leaving people without access to life-saving care, especially in rural areas. This is essential infrastructure that would be far easier to keep open than to rebuild. Hospital closures and increased costs mean fewer jobs and less spending from normal households, which will be disastrous for Maine's economy, where health care is one of the largest employment sectors.

These cuts, which according to DHHS, will result in "long-term health consequences including premature death," were made to pay for \$1 Trillion in tax cuts for corporations and the richest 1%. This is not a question of belt-tightening to make it through hard times, it is simply a move to pad the pockets of the already-rich at the cost of our health as a state and as a nation.

Fortunately, Maine doesn't have to accept this state of affairs. We urge you to support any and all opportunities to fully fund and expand MaineCare, and to provide funding to support health care providers at risk of closing, families facing increasing health insurance costs, and people who have lost their health insurance entirely.

These measures will require spending, but it is spending that is absolutely necessary to the health of Maine's people and economy. By raising revenue from the ultra-wealthy and corporations who benefit from the federal cuts, we can make the necessary investments without hurting ordinary Mainers. We need to raise revenue from those corporations and ultra-wealthy Mainers to fund the services and save the hospitals, jobs, and lives that the federal government is willing to sacrifice.

LD 1089, 1879, and 229 are bills currently before the legislature that would raise roughly \$215 million in revenue from ultra-wealth individuals and corporations making over \$3.5 Million in profits, while lowering the tax rate for 70% of Mainers. This would bring us within striking distance of backfilling these disastrous cuts and ensuring that all Mainers have access to health care. On behalf of our members, I urge you to reject the sacrifice of ordinary people for the private accumulation of vast amounts of wealth. We have an opportunity to stop the destruction caused by these cuts, and to build towards a future where every Mainer has access to high-quality health care. We are asking the honorable committee members to rise to the moment and meet that opportunity. Thank you very much.

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