

Testimony of Luisa S. Deprez, PhD, Professor Emerita of Sociology and Social Policy,
University of Southern Maine

LD 2122: An Act Making Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027

Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
March 9, 2025

Senator Hamper, Representative Rotundo, and members of the Committee Appropriations and Financial Affairs

My name is Luisa S. Deprez. I am Professor Emerita of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Southern Maine and a member of the Maine chapter of the national Scholars Strategy Network, which brings together scholars across the country to address public challenges and their policy implications.

My work on issues of poverty, social policy, and public assistance and safety net programs in Maine is well-known and long-standing, extending over the past 50 years.

I am here to testify in support of LD 2122 which intends to mitigate the devastating loss of SNAP and Medicaid benefits for thousands of Mainers due to the punishing federal cut-backs. I am grateful to Representative Gattine and his co-sponsors for bringing this legislation forward. It is critically needed.

By 2034, [Maine](#) is expected to lose \$3.9 billion in total Medicaid and SNAP funding.

Thirty-four thousand (34,000) Mainers are expected to lose Medicaid benefits, and 101,000 households are expected to lose SNAP benefits. These are lifelines for Maine families — not only for immediate health and food security, but for economic stability across our communities.

These projections come from [Visualizing H.R. 1 Cuts Data Dashboard](#), the recently launched Maine Children's Alliance's (MCA) response to the passage of H.R. 1, aka President Trump's "One Big Beautiful Bill Act". Enacted by Congress in July 2025, at the insistence of the President, the bill represents a major shift in federal policies supporting poor, low-income, and working families as it aims to reduce public program enrollment and expenditures. The overall well-being of households is not their concern.

The impact of the cuts will reach deep into Maine: the 53,999 households that rely on both Medicaid and SNAP will be hit hardest. Per capita funding losses will be highest in the rural counties of Washington, Somerset, and Franklin.

You, the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, and the Maine Legislature, has its work cut out for it as takes up [LD 2212: An Act Making Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027](#).

The challenge will be to lessen, if not prevent, the negative impacts of H.R. 1 on Maine households. Maine Children's Alliance's new [interactive resource](#) will help lawmakers to ascertain what is at stake for Maine's children, families, and communities if proposed changes to Medicaid and SNAP proceed without state mitigation. It also shows impact by legislative district so each legislator, each of you, can clearly see the number of households in their/your home district are at risk of losing SNAP benefits and Medicaid coverage as well as expose per capita cuts by county.

While some may assume that H.R. 1 is designed to only target the 11% of poor and low-income households in Maine who are allegedly, but wrongly, accused of being solely "dependent" on safety net programs. It does not. It will though further exacerbate the already precarious position that too many Mainers find themselves confronting.

At present, approximately 29% of working families in [Maine](#) are below the ALICE (**A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed) threshold. These are households with incomes *above* the Federal Poverty Line but not enough above to afford basic expenses - housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, and technology - in the county in which they live. Households are already forced to make impossible choices — like deciding whether to pay for utilities or a car repair, whether to buy food or fill a prescription.

Members of these households work in positions that keep our economy functioning smoothly: child care providers, food service workers, cashiers, personal care aides, delivery drivers, nurses' aides, health care counselors, teachers. They represent all demographic groups and their stories capture the systemic and structural barriers, and failures, to financial stability as well as the struggles and resilience of families experiencing financial hardship.

All told, the federal cuts will further stress the already precarious lives for an estimated 40% of households in [Maine](#) who are below the ALICE Threshold. And the impact will resonate upward into the middle-class and beyond. No one in the state will be spared; the impacts will ripple not only through families and communities but through the economy of the state.

The implications of H.R. 1 funding cutbacks and program eligibility changes cannot be ignored; the impact on Maine households, on Maine, will be too great. By [2034](#), Maine's loss of Medicaid and SNAP funding is estimated to result in a corresponding 444% increase in the SNAP share of the state budget.

A recent [article](#) in the Portland Press Herald shows that the ramifications of H.R. 1, coupled with rising prices in just about every arena, are not going unheard. Issues of "affordability" have moved "into the heart of lawmaking". "Shifting federal policy and economic uncertainty are 'making it harder for families to get ahead'" says Senate President Mattie Daughtry (D-Brunswick). "Maine people" she writes, "are doing everything right – working hard, caring for their families, and contributing to their communities – but too many are still being squeezed by rising costs they can't control".

While Democrats and Republicans may offer different solutions – hopefully more bipartisan ones than not, as will organizations around the state - the issue is now deservedly in the headlines.

I urge you to seek out constituents, ask them how they are doing, listen to their stories, look closely at the MCA [Dashboard](#) and share it with others in your district to be sure they know the

ramifications of not only H.R.1 but of LD 2122 and its ability to lessen the impact on Maine and thousands of its residents.

We must advocate for policies that safeguard Maine children's health, food security, and family economic stability. You have before you, the opportunity to do so. We are counting on you.

Maine needs you now to get this right!

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Luisa Deprez
Cape Elizabeth
LD 2212

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