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*Testimony of Representative Ambureen Rana Supporting*  
**LD 199, An Act to Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Removing**  
**Exclusions to the MaineCare Program**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services*

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Ambureen Rana, and I represent House District 21, which includes a portion of Bangor. I am here before you today to support **LD 199, An Act to Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Removing Exclusions to the MaineCare Program.**

My father came to America at the age of 23 in 1973. He spent the majority of his life here—nearly 50 years. This was his home. When my father left Pakistan, his goal was to ensure that his siblings were taken care of. Their parents passed away when they were young, so he took on the role of their caretaker. It took 30 years, but through hard work, piles of paperwork and saving money, he was able to bring all of his siblings to New England so he could care for them close to home. Many of his siblings were able to build lives of their own and move out of our home once they were secure enough to do so. Due to developmental and physical disability, two of his siblings stayed with us for our family to care for. Three years after my father brought his brothers and sisters to Maine, he had a major, debilitating stroke. My mother took over caring for me, my brother, my aunt, my uncle and the family business.

My aunt and my uncle studied hard to become U.S. citizens, overcoming the barriers of disabilities that made learning difficult. They were so proud to take their oath in 2014.

I look back on what life would have been like if they hadn't had MaineCare access throughout their lives here in the U.S. Would my uncle have made it to the hospital and gotten proper treatment after suffering a heart attack? Would my aunt have survived an infection that led to sepsis?

Not only is providing access to health care the humane, morally correct thing to do, but it's the most practical thing to do as well for the betterment of our state. Maine's economic future depends on attracting a skilled workforce to the state, and Maine's immigrants are an important part of that future. For at least the last decade, the Maine Department of Labor has been warning of a worker shortage due to people aging-out of our workforce and leaving the state at higher rates than they are moving to our state. Further, Maine's fertility rate (defined as the number of births per 1,000 women aged 15-44) rose 1.4% (totaling 49.9% in 2021), outpacing the average national growth. However, this rate is still in the bottom five nationally, which economists have warned could eventually worsen our existing workforce issues.

I urge you to join me, and the other legislators and advocates in this room, in supporting this bill. Thank you for your consideration.