

Good afternoon Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and Honorable members of the joint standing committee. My name is Milagros Sanchez, and I have been living in Maine on and off for the past three years.

My sister has lived in Maine for many years, and at the start of COVID-19 we wanted to come to Maine to be close to family. We came to Maine seeking a place to call home that was peaceful and where we could access critical medical services. My son has cerebral palsy, and he needs to be able to access services, treatment and medication on a regular basis.

Luckily, we found the services that he needed here at Central Maine Medical center. We were relieved, because our son had been suffering severe flare ups with his condition, since he had gone without treatment at the start of the pandemic. He was able to get the life saving treatment he needed. Unfortunately, later we received bills for hundreds of thousands of dollars. I am sick over how we will be able to pay those bills.

People with special needs shouldn't have to make the decision between life saving treatment and a place to live or food to eat. I have dedicated my life to my son, and his wellness and ability to thrive in a world that is not always set up to support him is what I spend most of my time fighting for.

We would like to make Maine our home, and invest in this community. I am an educator and a psychologist, and would like to be able to bring my skills to enrich the lives of students here in Maine. Unfortunately, because of the ability to afford medical care, we've had to leave at times and consider other places to live. This is stressful and unfair for my family, and especially for my son. I do not want him to have to worry about my stress, and I don't want him to feel that he is a burden to me, our family, or this system. Social safety nets are designed to support people who need it the most, and I just want my son to be able to access the care that he deserves.

I see lots of people struggling here who have been living and contributing to Maine for decades. I am shocked that they work so hard to support the Maine economy, and that they cannot benefit from the same basic services that others are able to access.

All we want is the dignity and fairness of the same treatment as any other resident of Maine. The time to restore MaineCare coverage for all is now. Thank you for your time.