

My name is Adriana Mercedes, and I was born and raised mostly in Maine. The rest of the time we were in México, in my dad's home state of Chihuahua. I went to college in Vermont, but moved back to Maine the night I graduated. I consider myself to be a Mainer, through and through. It's a big part of my identity, and I've started to build my career here - seeking to combat inequity and increase access to resources. I was raised to leave things better than I found them, especially things that are important to me.

It's important to me that the people I live and work with are healthy and cared for. It's important to me that the workers processing lobster, picking blueberries, and harvesting potatoes - making our exports and \$10 billion tourist industry possible - are healthy and cared for. Immigrants contribute another \$193 million in taxes every year. The fair thing is to remove MaineCare exclusions.

The *practical* thing is to remove Mainecare exclusions. Increasing access to healthcare - access to preventative, primary care - reduces burdens on the healthcare system in the long term, for individuals and intergenerationally. Healthy parents raise healthy kids. Healthy kids are good learners and playmates. Preventative care reduces reliance on prescription and over-the-counter medicines, on emergency services, and on invasive procedures.

I'm invested in my community and my home. I'm invested in my colleagues, my neighbors, and my friends. *All of them*, regardless of their migration status. Immigrants have invested in Maine for centuries, and until recently these exclusions did not exist. It's time to hold up our end of the bargain again and eliminate unjust, illogical barriers to basic human rights. It's time to take care of our own.