

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Souad, and I am a mother of two beautiful children born in the United States. I came to this country from Djibouti in 2016. I am here today to urge you to support LD 199.

I left my country to escape fear. Now, my biggest fear as an asylum seeker is getting sick and not being able to afford the health coverage I need to receive. I can't imagine being unable to support my children and mother because of my health condition. I live in a constant stream of fear and stress about what the future may hold.

As an asylum seeker, I am a frontline worker, a Community Health Worker supporting people to access health care services. I'm a taxpayer, yet I still face several barriers to navigating the healthcare system because of my current immigration status. We need support to thrive while we are working on standing on our own two feet and on being self-sufficient. As a mother, having access to affordable healthcare is critical for my ability to participate in the economy, raise healthy children, and support my community.

Investing in Maine Care means investing in the future of Maine. It means giving people like me a chance to contribute to society, support our families, and pursue our dreams. Please support LD 199 and ensure that all Mainers access affordable healthcare.

Thank you.