

Selam Runyon-Baruch's Testimony

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services: my name is Selam Runyon-Baruch. I am here today to share my story in support of LD 199. Access to healthcare is a fundamental human right. I want the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services to consider the emotional toll our current healthcare system has on individuals like me.

Six years ago, I was in a severe car accident that changed my life forever. At the time, I didn't have health insurance, and I remember feeling helpless when the officer asked if he could call an ambulance for me. I had to refuse because I couldn't afford it, even though I had blacked out during the accident and had cuts and bruises all over my body.

It's been six years since that accident, and I still remember the fear and anxiety that came with the realization that my health was not a priority in our current system. While I am fortunate enough to have health insurance now, I understand what it means to live with the fear of not having access to healthcare.

As someone who has experienced the shortcomings of our current healthcare system firsthand, I implore you to consider the human impact of this issue. No one should have to choose between their health and financial security. The emotional toll of feeling that your health is not valued can be overwhelming. Let's work together to ensure that every person in Maine can access the care they need to live a healthy and fulfilling life.

Thank you for allowing me to share my story, and I urge you to support LD 199.