

March 28, 2023

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and Honorable Members of the Health and Human Services Committee.

My name is Kandie Cleaves, and I reside in Garland. I am here to testify in favor of, **LD 199 “An Act to Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Removing Exclusions to the MaineCare Program”**

I’ve testified in the past on multiple bills that would provide access to health care and dental care, yet here we are again. Other than what I believe should be the obvious reason, that everyone deserves the right to access health care, it always comes down to money. Including asking how can we afford to do this? As a taxpayer my question to you, is how can we afford not to? When a person goes without basic health care, they are more likely to not be seen until things become significantly worse and more costly. When they do go it is often the Emergency Room, they land in. If you can’t afford to pay your hospital bill, that cost gets rolled over elsewhere. Who pays in the long run? We all do. If we provided the needed healthcare, it would be a more cost efficient way to spend our tax dollars. Healthy people do better in

the workforce, their homes, and their communities. Our Immigrant community already contributes well over \$190 million to state and local taxes, imagine if everyone had access to proper healthcare, if we helped them to thrive, how many more ways their contributions would grow.

In closing I ask again that you please vote in favor of LD199.

Sincerely,

Kandie Cleaves

Garland