

Good afternoon, Senator Bailey, Representative Perry, Senator Tipping and members of the Committee.

My name is Lynn Cheney. I live in Blue Hill, and I am speaking today on behalf of Maine AllCare in support of LD 329. Maine AllCare is a non-profit, formed in 2010, established for the sole purpose of promoting publicly funded health care for all Maine residents. We are concerned that small, incremental steps will not achieve this goal. We see the need for a comprehensive plan that will corral the federal dollars being spent on health care in our state and establish a unified payment system with the ability control costs and provide high quality coverage for every resident.

In the 130<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session, this committee, chaired by Sen. Heather Sanborn, voted to approve LD1045, An Act to Support Universal Health Care, as amended. This bill was vigorously supported by Maine AllCare. It was passed by the Legislature and became Public Law 391 in July 2021. It establishes the Maine Health Care Plan to provide for all medically necessary services for all residents of Maine. It establishes the Maine Health Care Board to create, implement and oversee this Plan. However, PL391 requires that Federal legislation enabling state-based plans be enacted before the law takes effect.

In the same session, the Legislature passed a Joint Resolution, sponsored by Sen. Sanborn and other members of your committee, asking Congress and the President to pass such legislation. The resolution specifically references HR 5010, the State-Based Universal Health Care Act introduced by California Representative Ro Khanna. In essence, this bill bundles the existing federal funding streams to states from Medicaid, Medicare and the Affordable Care Act and adds a waiver for the Employee Retirement Security Act (ERISA). Rep. Khanna will be reintroducing a similar bill in September 2023. However, given the current political reality in the House, the chances of this bill even coming up for a vote are slim.

Senator Tipping's LD329 affords us the chance to start the work on PL391. It establishes a Working Group on Guaranteed Health Care with a charge of determining the steps required for designing a unified health care financing system and obtaining needed federal waivers. It also acknowledges that outside experts will be needed in this process.

The Working Group will find that in order to apply for federal waivers, CMS will require Maine to have a health reform plan that meets its requirements and legislation passed that seeks the specified waivers. Maine AllCare urges the formation of this Working Group and stands ready to provide assistance.