



Maine Hospital Association

MAINE'S LEADING  
VOICE FOR HEALTHCARE

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## TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE HOSPITAL ASSOCIATION

In Opposition to

**LD 1955** - *An Act To Require Hospitals And Hospital-affiliated Providers To  
Provide Financial Assistance For Medical Care*

January 17, 2024

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Jeffrey Austin and I am presenting testimony **in opposition to LD 1955** on behalf of the Maine Hospital Association.

Currently, hospitals have to provide mandatory charity care under state law and craft financial assistance policies under federal law. We are aware of no problems with Maine's existing law which is primarily outlined in Maine DHHS regulations.

None of the proponents reached out to MHA prior to the bill being filed a year ago. None reached out to us over the Summer or Fall. We were first contacted about this bill by Consumers for Affordable Health Care a few weeks ago after the bill was scheduled for a hearing. We really don't know why this bill is before you.

The bill is a complete overhaul of charity care law and is the introduction for the first time of a regulatory scheme for financial assistance provided beyond charity care, such as payment plans.

It is extremely frustrating to see such a complete overhaul of a law administered by hospitals and for which hospitals carry the entire financial burden without any prior outreach.

I only have 3 minutes, so I can't not walk through with you all of the different problems with the drafting. But many of them are so basic and easily avoided if the authors had known anything about the way charity care obligations are administered by hospitals. The authors don't and this bill is largely unworkable from our perspective. I would be happy to cite a few examples if you would like.

Finally, section 2 is being actively debated in separate legislation in the Insurance Committee.

Please reject LD 1955. Thank you.