



Cameron Reny
Senator, District 13

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony of Sen. Cameron Reny introducing
**LD 697, "An Act to Direct the Maine Prescription Drug Affordability Board to
Assess Strategies to Reduce Prescription Drug Costs and to Take Steps to
Implement Reference-based Pricing"**
*before the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial
Services*

Thursday, March 13, 2025

Senator Bailey, Representative Gramlich, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, I am Senator Cameron Reny, and I represent District 13, which includes most of Lincoln County and the towns of Washington and Windsor. Today, I am here to introduce of LD 697, "An Act to Direct the Maine Prescription Drug Affordability Board to Assess Strategies to Reduce Prescription Drug Costs and to Take Steps to Implement Reference-based Pricing."

As you know, prescription drug costs have been a persistent issue for many Mainers, particularly our older Mainers, those with disabilities, people with chronic illness, and lower-income families. They are shouldering an immense burden due to the high cost of prescription medications. This burden often forces them to make difficult choices: whether to adhere to a prescribed regimen or cut pills in half to save money, whether to pay for food or medicine, or whether to risk their health due to financial constraints.

I've seen students thrive academically and socially when their families can afford their prescribed medications, and I've seen those same students struggle with classmates and grades when prescription costs put those same medications out of reach. I once spoke with a constituent who had to take out a personal loan to afford her insulin. She works full time and had to take out a personal loan so she could keep living. We all know how important it is to reduce the cost of prescription drugs. The bill before you today is a part of achieving that goal.

Here in Maine, we have a board that is dedicated to getting drug prices to where people can afford them: the Prescription Drug Affordability Board, or PDAB for short. However, this board has no staff and no teeth. You will hear testimony from members of this board providing further detail as to why they need staffing to be more effective. LD 697 seeks to address that, as well as give the Board direction in finding prescription drug savings for Mainers.

This bill makes the Board stronger and better informed by adding a non-voting member with expertise in health data. This will enable the Board to better access and interpret pricing, affordability, and health care cost data, which we all know can be a bear. They need this expertise to achieve their mission.

LD 697 is a piece of a similar bill which passed both chambers last session but failed to be funded: LD 1829. That bill, which I also sponsored, would have additionally required the Board to implement referenced-based pricing for state-regulated insurers here in Maine, making it so that they could only pay up to the Medicare negotiated prices for the drugs. This bill is narrower than 1829. It instead requires the Board to research a variety of strategies, and then give recommendations to the Legislature on the most effective policies to bring down drug prices in Maine.

Finally, this bill requires that the Board develop a program to reduce the impact of prescription drug costs on the State's health care system, stem the rate of growth in prescription drug spending, and reduce cost barriers for consumers. The plan they submit to the Legislature will need to include recommended legislation to support prescription drug affordability.

In conclusion, this bill is a statement to the people of Maine that their health is not a commodity. Mainers deserve access to affordable medications and should not have to choose between their health and financial stability.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cameron Reny". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "R" at the end.

Cameron Reny

State Senator, District 13

Representing Lincoln County and the towns of Washington and Windsor