

**TESTIMONY OF BOB CAREY
SUPERINTENDENT
BUREAU OF INSURANCE
DEPARTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL AND FINANCIAL REGULATION
In opposition to L.D. 843
An Act to Continue Funding for the Health Insurance Consumer Assistance
Program
Presented by Senator Tipping
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage,
Insurance & Financial Services
April 29, 2025 at 1:00pm**

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, I am Bob Carey, Superintendent of the Maine Bureau of Insurance. I am here today to testify in opposition to LD 843.

This bill would appropriate \$300,000 from Bureau funds for the Health Insurance Consumer Assistance Program (HICAP) in each of FY 2026 and FY 2027 (\$600,000 total). The Bureau recognizes the valuable assistance provided to Maine people by HICAP, which is operated by Consumers for Affordable Health Care (CAHC). However, we oppose the use of insurance licensing fees and other dedicated revenues of the Bureau for this program.

Since 2020, \$1.4 million of Bureau funds have been sent to HICAP through a contract with the Attorney General's Office. The amount was negotiated among legislators and interested parties, a group that did not include Bureau staff.

The HCIFS Committee's past recommendation has been to fund HICAP through the general fund, rather than through BOI's dedicated revenue. The BOI is a regulator, and using its funds for CAHC activities is not appropriate to the BOI's regulatory mission. Furthermore, CAHC regularly appears in health insurance rate proceedings as an advocate for consumers. The Bureau's role in those proceedings is to ensure that health insurance rates are not inadequate, excessive, or unfairly discriminatory. Although consumer impact is an important part of the BOI's rate analysis, this responsibility is different than looking at rate issues as a consumer advocate. There are times when CAHC's positions may not be the same as the ultimate rate decision reached by the Bureau. Finally, every insurance entity licensed or registered to conduct business in Maine is assessed fees that support the operations of the Bureau. In addition to health, this includes auto, homeowners, life, workers' compensation, and other types of insurance that have nothing to do with health insurance. The Bureau does not believe that funding a third-party health care consumer outreach program with fees associated with other lines of insurance is appropriate.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer questions today or at the work session.