

TO: The Honorable Donna Bailey
The Honorable Kristi Michele Mathieson
Members of the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee

DATE: May 6, 2025

RE: LD 985

Good Day Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and Members of the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee,

My name is Victoria Olson and I live in Waldo Maine. I'm here today to support LD 985 and to thank you for undergoing the process to develop legislation to protect public health and health care provision into the future.

I provided health care for a majority of my career, in a subspecialty concerned with connective tissue and structural alignment. Part of my work was practical education for preventing injury or ameliorating its effects.

I found preventive health care to be a tough sell at times. Patients were trained to expect some kind of miracle treatment to solve all their situations. This way of thinking was not a surprise, nor is it random. It is connected to perverse incentives that dictate protocols to support a for-profit delivery system.

In my observation, our health care system puts profit first and foremost. Practitioners are influenced to promote costly treatment protocols and pharmaceutical drugs, and people are influenced to think in terms of miracle drugs and procedures.

The profit motive seems to have become the default moral compass of American enterprise, both public and private. Nearly every action by any entity in pursuit of upping the bottom line is considered not only fair game, but also right and proper.

I recently watched a documentary on The Gilded Age, detailing the rise of certain industrialists - commonly known as the Robber Barons - in the United States in the late 19th Century. In it I saw crimes against humanity brought about by working conditions in factories and mines. The casualty rate was high among workers, and those who survived actual physical injury from machinery, or exhaustion from extreme overwork, were still subject to financial violence.

Brave people came forth to demand of their government protection from predatory capitalism. Their failure to obtain protection from the ravages of industrialists, who owned everything, including federal governance, sparked many a movement for fairness and justice, some of which succeeded over time. We still need them today.

Events depicted in the historical account gave me an understanding of the mindset of those at the top of society's pyramid at the time - in particular, their depraved indifference to the fate of those humans whose bodies and brains were the engine of their wealth.

It doesn't take X-ray vision to see that predatory capitalism continues to this day, and it's obvious that protection through legislation is the best route to any kind of equity for the social necessity of health care to be available to all.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.