

Testimony in Support of LD 1883 May 14, 2025

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson and members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee,

I am Jane Pringle and I live in Windham. I am testifying in strong support of LD1883.

1. As a Physician who practiced and taught primary care General Internal Medicine in Portland for 35 years I can tell you that, after one learns the basic skills of history taking and physical diagnosis we have to commit to a process of lifelong learning. We must keep up with scientific advancements that can help our patients.

Today there are excellent online, peer reviewed resources, such as "UpToDate" or the National Library of Medicine "MedLine", and Consensus Guidelines which enable us to look up, in real time, the answers we need to solve a patient's problem.

In addition we need to know how to assess our patient's individual risk factors for illness and know how to do "Shared Decision Making" so our patients can make the choices that are right for them and their tolerance for risk and willingness to undertake specific treatments.

In the U.S. we add more complexity to caring for our patients by having a complex payment "system" with multiple payers, some private, some public, some "non-profit", some "for profit". Each has it's own rules, it's own formulary and it's own layer of administrative burden. Many of us have no insurance and require help to apply for programs that will help pay for our care or our medicines.

Some plans pay more than the cost of care and others do not cover the cost.

2. LD 1883 offers a way to have a single payment system using all of the current sources of payment based on current standards of care. It provides a way to adapt those standards as medical science advances. And it provides care equitably to all people.

About 40 other countries use a similar system, each with their own specifics for their country, but all covering everyone equally with a single payment system.

They all spend less per person per year and they get better health outcomes!!

For example they live longer. Fewer babies and mothers die in childbirth. They are better able to return to work after an illness, and many more measures of health.

3. So...why are we so stupid ? Why have we kept a system that is so broken, so expensive and so complicated and so unfair?

Perhaps Winston Churchill got it right when he said “You can always count on Americans to do the right thing- after they have tried everything else.”

4. My advice is that we need to:

A. As Steve Jobs said “Think Different”. His story of persistence to create something to do what he wanted, required him to learn from his mistakes and work with others to develop a product that has changed our world.

B. See “Government” NOT as the problem but as “The Solution.” I suggest that you look to the non-partisan staff you work with here. They are skilled, knowledgeable people who support each of you regardless of your party affiliation or political views. They work for all the citizens of Maine, often at salaries that are 2/3rds or 3/4's of what they could make in the private sector.

Look at yourselves. I have listened to at least 3 of your public hearings and work sessions. You have asked good questions, listened to each other with civility and voted unanimously most of the time. All committees in the legislature vote unanimously more than half the time. You are our government, working as public servants doing hard work.

C. Keep an Open Mind. Seek to understand and then to be understood. See things from multiple viewpoints. I view myself as both Liberal and Conservative. I want to be Free to make my own choices and I don't like wasting money. I am willing to spend money now in order to save money later. (That is why I am particularly sad that we under invest in our Primary Care and Public Health, which are both shown to prevent illness and keep people healthy.)

D. Finally, let's follow the state's motto “Dirigo” or “I Lead”, and “As Maine goes, so goes the nation”. We can be one of several states which implement a new model and help our country find the way. We can finally, as Churchill said, “Do the right thing”.

Others will explain the details of this bill and are better able to answer questions about how to make it work. To those who will testify today in opposition I ask you to come to the table and help offer solutions to the problems you see. Please be willing to work to support the “Common Good”.

Please vote Ought to Pass or OTP as amended and also pass LD1269 to study the costs of implementation of our new system to work together to Save Lives and Save Money.

Thank you. I am happy to answer any questions.

Jane Pringle, M.D.