

Courtney Shank, Gorham Maine

Senator Ingwerson, Representative Meyer, Senator Grohoski, Representative Gattine, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services: my name is Courtney Shank and I live in Gorham, ME. I am here today to testify neither for nor against LD 2212.

I am here as someone directly impacted by the proposed federal health care cuts. I am a full-time college student, working a part-time job that does not provide health insurance benefits. I do not receive financial support from my parents. MaineCare is the only reason I am able to access health care while working to build a stable future for myself.

Without MaineCare, I would not be able to afford doctor's visits, prescriptions, or mental health care. As a student balancing classes, work, and basic living expenses like car insurance and tuition, there is simply no room in my budget for private insurance premiums or unexpected medical bills. Losing coverage would mean delaying care, going without medications, or facing debt that could follow me for years.

According to the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, these federal cuts would reduce funding to health care providers across Maine. That means fewer services, longer wait times, potential job losses, and even hospital closures — especially in rural areas. When providers lose funding, patients lose access. Students, working families, seniors, and people with disabilities will all feel the impact.

At the same time, national analysis from the Center for American Progress shows that these Medicaid cuts are being used to help finance massive tax cuts for corporations and the wealthiest Americans. That includes the wealthiest Mainers. It is hard to understand why students and working people should lose health care so that those at the top can receive more tax breaks.

I am doing everything I am supposed to do — working, studying, and trying to become self-sufficient. MaineCare is not a handout; it is a bridge that allows me to stay healthy while I invest in my education and future career. Cutting it would not encourage work — it would make it harder to succeed.

If the federal government chooses to reduce its commitment to Medicaid, Maine must step up. We need to raise progressive revenue from corporations and ultra-wealthy Mainers to backfill these cuts, fully fund MaineCare, and continue expanding access to care. Health care should not disappear for students like me because of decisions made in Washington.

Health care is a human right; no one should be sick because they are poor and no one should be poor because they are sick. I urge you to protect MaineCare and ensure that students, workers, and vulnerable Mainers do not lose the coverage that keeps us healthy and able to contribute to our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.