



Testimony in Support of
LD 2208, An Act to Offset Federal Cuts to Health Insurance for
Certain Maine Families and Seniors

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Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson and distinguished members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, my name is Kim Cook and I am an attorney with Government Strategies, testifying in support of LD 2208 on behalf of Community Health Options. Community Health Options is Maine's nonprofit CO-OP health insurance company and exists for the benefit of its Members and its mission which is to provide affordable, high-quality benefits that promote health and wellbeing.

As we all know, our health system is under significant strain, from rural hospital service closures to rising health care costs and the resulting increases to public and private health care coverage.

At the same time that people need convenient access to facilities and providers, they also need affordable health insurance coverage. Data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) indicate approximately a 9.5% decrease in individual market enrollment in Maine following the loss of enhanced premium tax credits.^{1,2} The expiration of the enhanced premium tax credits contributed to the 23.9% average rate increase in the individual market in Maine from 2025 to 2026. This change also reduced the effectiveness of the Maine Guaranteed Access Reinsurance Association's (MGARA) program because diminished enrollment, stagnant funding, and fewer federal pass-through dollars limit MGARA's ability to offset premiums.

Creating a Health Care Premium Stabilization Fund to restore enhanced premium tax credits to eligible Mainers would bolster enrollment by attracting middle-income enrollees, enlarge the risk pool, and strengthen MGARA. Coupling these enhanced premium tax credits with state funding for MGARA will lower premiums in the individual and small group markets and provide additional premium support to help Maine people afford their health coverage.

Maine faces a dual challenge: maintaining access to vital health care services while keeping health coverage affordable. LD 2208 takes proactive steps to address both by supporting rural providers through the Rural Health Stabilization Fund and by stabilizing the insurance market through the Health Care Premium Stabilization Fund and MGARA. Together, these measures protect access and promote affordability. We appreciate the opportunity to express our support for LD 2208.

1. Marketplace 2025 Open Enrollment Period Report: National Snapshot. CMS. <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/marketplace-2025-open-enrollment-period-report-national-snapshot-2>.
2. Marketplace 2026 Open Enrollment Period Report: National Snapshot. CMS. <https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/marketplace-2026-open-enrollment-period-report-national-snapshot-2>.