



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN MAINE

Loring House

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February 16, 2021

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and Members of the Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services Committee, please accept this testimony in **support** of LD 274, on behalf of the Maine Episcopal Public Policy Network.

Our role in responding to epidemics, as churches, dioceses and compassionate Christians, is to combat fear with knowledge in order to encourage preparedness and decrease stigma, maintain operational continuity and continue worship life in the case of potential quarantine and disruption, and show God's compassion and care to those in our communities who are affected.

As Episcopalians, we encourage people of faith and good will, especially during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, to follow sound public health guidelines that help us live our healthiest lives while also protecting other community members, those known and unknown to us, but all known and beloved by God.

This admonition rings even more true when we realize how COVID is disproportionately harming communities of color, low-income families, those who are homeless, urban/rural, sexual minorities, and people living with pre-existing conditions, including people living with HIV, who lack adequate health care.

We understand this legislation will determine the best methods and definitions to use in collecting data to assist addressing disparities in health care in our state.

Faith traditions seeks to promote the common good. Our forebears in faith started hospitals, developed countless programs to comfort the afflicted, and called for socially responsible, scientifically sound practices for reducing poverty, curing illness, and educating the community.

We're grateful for the scientists, researchers, public health experts, and to our elected representatives, who are continuously trying to expand our knowledge and strengthen our capacity to bring healing and reduce suffering. Please support LD 274.

Respectfully submitted,

John Hennessy