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Superintendent

**TESTIMONY OF ERIC CIOPPA
SUPERINTENDENT OF INSURANCE
BUREAU OF INSURANCE
DEPARTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL AND FINANCIAL REGULATION
NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST L.D. 631**

**“An Act To Provide Funding for Maine's Health Insurance
Consumer Assistance Program”**

**Sponsored by Senator Stacey Brenner
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage,
Insurance and Financial Services
March 16, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.**

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and members of the Committee, I am Superintendent of Insurance Eric Cioppa. I am here to speak neither for nor against L.D. 631.

This bill would add a provision to the Health Plan Improvement Act chapter of the Insurance Code requiring the State to pay for the Health Insurance Consumer Assistance Program (HICAP) on a permanent basis and, in unallocated language, would transfer a total of \$400,000 (\$200,000 in FY 2021-22, and



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\$200,000 in FY 2022-2023) from the Bureau's Other Special Revenue Funds account to the Attorney General's office to fund this program.

The federal government established Consumer Assistance Programs under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in 2010 to help people find coverage options and enroll in coverage. Maine received federal grant funds for the HICAP for the first few years the ACA was in effect. Federal funds for all Consumer Assistance Programs across the country were discontinued in 2012.

In response, the 129th Legislature enacted PL 2019, chapter 522, which resurrected the HICAP. This program assists consumers with: complaints and appeals, education on their rights and responsibilities within health insurance, information to aid them in making informed coverage purchasing decisions, and in obtaining federal premium tax credits. The Attorney General's office has contracted with Consumers for Affordable Healthcare to provide this program since 2019. Under this law, the Bureau paid \$200,000 on October 1, 2019 and again on July 1, 2020 to fund the program.

This bill seeks the same funding from the Bureau of \$200,000 on October 1, 2021 and \$200,000 on July 1, 2022 for this program.

The Bureau is generally supportive of efforts to assist Mainers with health insurance issues and questions. However, the Legislature has dedicated the Bureau's funding to support the Superintendent's obligation to enforce the

insurance laws of Maine. We hope that using dedicated funds for programs that do not directly relate to entities or programs subject to our jurisdiction would not be a regular practice.

I would be happy to answer any questions now or at the work session.

Thank you.