



Stacy Brenner
Senator, District 30

THE MAINE SENATE
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388 Broadturn Road
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Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services

Testimony in support of LD 120, “An Act To Lower Health Care Costs through the Establishment of the Office of Affordable Health Care”

April 13, 2021

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler and honorable colleagues of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, I am Senator Stacy Brenner and I represent Senate District 30, which includes Gorham, most of Scarborough and part of Buxton. I’m here today to speak in support of LD 120, “An Act To Lower Health Care Costs through the Establishment of the Office of Affordable Health Care.”

Throughout my career as a nurse-midwife, I have seen many of my patients struggle with the high costs of health care. I’ve sat with patients who needed to ask for a less expensive medication option, or had them tell me they had skipped taking their medication because they couldn’t afford it. This is not a unique experience among healthcare providers. As medical professionals, we always do our best to care for patients and help them achieve the best possible outcomes. The fact that cost stands in the way of folks getting and staying healthy is inexcusable. It doesn’t matter who they are, the costs of healthcare and prescription drugs can be devastating to one’s finances and health. Time and time again, the overarching, consistent message from my constituents includes a profound dissatisfaction with the cost/benefit analysis of their experience accessing and receiving health care.

We know we have to take action, and that’s why I’m proud to testify in support of this bill. By creating the Office of Affordable Health Care, we can have an entity solely dedicated to identifying the root causes of sky-rocketing health care costs. To tackle a massive issue such as this, we need bold action. Establishing this new office with a mission to analyze data and develop strategy based in data science will be a game changer for Maine. As you very well know, with most bills that come before us on the HCIFS committee, we are just picking away at the problem. This bill is a vehicle to help us achieve a more systemic and informed approach to the kinds of policy that will really make a difference for healthcare affordability in Maine. My friends, the Federal Government is not coming any time soon to save us from the despair and real challenge of our healthcare system. Real change comes from innovative state actions that are

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smart, courageous and forward thinking. The Office of Affordable Health Care is just that kind of action.

Thank you for your time, and I would urge you to support this bill along with the others we are hearing today.