

**TESTIMONY OF LEO KOCH  
Resident of Waterville, ME**

**In Support of LD 673,  
An Act To Create the Insulin Safety Net**

**Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services**

**April 13, 2021**

My name is Leo Koch. I live in Waterville, Maine and I am 14 years old. I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes when I was 2 ½.

Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune disease. It means my pancreas doesn't make insulin, and I have to take artificial insulin, or I will die. I don't have to take it just when I eat. My body needs insulin 24 hours a day. I either have to give myself shots or use an insulin pump. I have used an insulin pump almost from the day of my diagnosis.

I don't remember my life without diabetes. But I know how it makes me different, even though I look the same. When I was little, sometimes I would miss playtime because my blood sugar was low but everyone else got to play. Sometimes, I have to wait 45 minutes to eat dinner because my blood sugar is high, but the food is hot and ready to eat. I remember I'm different when it's 2 a.m. and we have to change my insulin pump, because it's clogged, and all my friends are asleep, and I'm tired at school the next day and my teachers don't know why. When everyone eats ice cream after a big season win, or when my insulin pump falls off during basketball camp because I'm so sweaty, I am reminded I am different. When I send my mom a picture of a plate of food, waiting to eat and give myself insulin, because I'm not sure how to count the carbs, and everyone else is almost done eating. I know what my body feels like when it aches so much because my blood sugar is too high, or when it shakes, and sweats because my blood sugar is so low. I may not remember what it's like to not have diabetes, but I see what it looks like. I can try and describe to you what it feels like to have diabetes, but you cannot ever fully understand.

I'm only 14. There's a lot about diabetes I haven't had to worry about that I know I'll have to when I get older. I want to think about the Celtics and saving money for a car. I don't want to think about saving money for insulin. I'm lucky that my parents make sure I don't have to worry about it now. But I'm afraid I will have to in the future. So, I'm here today to ask you to please pass LD 673. It's not my fault that I have type 1 diabetes, and it's not right for companies to take advantage of me. My life depends on insulin. I think it's ok for them to want to make a profit, but I shouldn't be held hostage or die. No one should. Please vote to pass LD 673. Thank you.