



Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services: thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in favor of LD 1390.

My name is Cate Blackford. I am the Public Policy Director of the Maine People's Alliance. MPA is Maine's largest community action organization with over 32,000 members across the state. Our mission is to create a world where everyone has what they need, contributes what they can, and no one is left behind.

MPA supports LD 1390, which would reduce barriers to accessing health care and increase enrollment in MaineCare and other low cost plans on Maine's new health care exchange.

MPA has long supported ensuring that we have an integrated safety net, to make sure that everyone can access the full set of supports for which they are qualified. Unfortunately, our administrative systems are scattered across many different departments, all with their own IT systems, making this kind of integration difficult.

We believe that one of the best examples of how we can make programs work together more efficiently is by focusing on how Maine Revenue Services and DHHS can cooperate. The Earned Income Tax Credit, the Sales Tax Fairness Credit, the Property Tax Fairness Credit (for which renters can qualify), and the Child Care Tax Credit can all help low income people access targeted support, but too often low income Mainers do not file their income tax, not realizing that these are all refundable credits. In 2013 MPA helped pass legislation that requires DHHS to ensure that they support people in filing these kind of tax returns to qualify for those credits.

It only makes good sense that we should ensure that things flow the other way as well. By allowing MRS to share information with the health care exchange when given permission by filers, they can be on the

lookout for benefits that low income people could qualify for that are run by DHHS. Health care is by far the most significant. By connecting MRS with the new exchange, and subsequently MaineCare if they are eligible, we can help ensure that people who qualify for MaineCare receive it and other uninsured Mainers are connected with low cost plans.

Maine People's Alliance supports LD 1390 and the steps it takes towards leaving no one behind. I urge you to vote Ought to Pass.

Thank you for your consideration.

Cate Blackford

Maine People's Alliance

For questions, please contact Cate Blackford at cate@mainepeoplesalliance.org