



Senator Cathy Breen

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Appropriations & Financial Affairs
Committee, Chair

Testimony in support of

LD 1045, An Act To Support Universal Health Care

Senator Cathy Breen

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Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Committee On Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, my name is Cathy Breen. I represent Maine Senate District 25, which includes the communities of Chebeague Island, Cumberland, Falmouth, Gray, Long Island, Yarmouth, and about half of the City of Westbrook. I am here to testify in support of **LD 1045, An Act To Support Universal Health Care.**

By now, we have all heard that America spends more per capita on health care than any other nation and, in exchange, receives worse health outcomes. Our system has been broken for a long time and I believe the only way to truly fix it is to move to a single-payer model. LD 1045 would implement such a system to provide quality, universal health care to all Mainers by January 1, 2024.

This bill would provide portable coverage for Maine's people regardless of their employment status. It would be publically funded and would allow patients to choose their providers without requiring a referral. Premium costs would be based on a patient's ability to pay, and there would be no deductible or copayment for benefits. Perhaps best of all, it would

offer a comprehensive list of covered benefits, including emergency care and transportation, hospice care, dental care, prescription drugs, substance use disorder treatment and mental health services.

The Maine Health Care Plan would remove the confusing bureaucratic maze that folks often have to navigate at the exact moment when they are least able to do so. It is designed to be simple and efficient and would reduce costs by eliminating redundant administrative expenses. Even the application for enrollment is required to be no more than two pages.

I support this bill because, like so many of us, I have found myself sorting through a pile of bills on the kitchen table and placing long calls to insurance companies, trying to find out what I owe to whom. Most of the rest of the world has moved on to a much simpler, intuitive structure and, with six in ten Americans believing the healthcare system in this country has major problems,¹ it's long past time we did too. I support this bill to set an example for the rest of the country, to show that we can make meaningful changes if we have the strength and foresight to do so.

Thank you, and I am happy to take any questions.

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¹ Jeffrey M. Jones, "Reduced Majority in U.S. Critical of Healthcare System," *Gallup*, December 18, 2020. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/327968/reduced-majority-critical-healthcare-system.aspx>