



PO Box 8, Augusta, ME 04330
admin@muusan.org

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Testimony Before the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services
On LD 1045: An Act To Support Universal Health Care.

Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler and Honorable Members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Patty Kidder and I live in the village of Springvale located in the city, Sanford. I submit these remarks as a representative of the Maine Unitarian Universalist State Advocacy Network, a faith-based organization which affirms and promotes justice, equity and compassion in human relations, and the inherent worth and dignity of every person. My faith motivates me to speak in favor of LD 1045: An Act To Support Universal Health Care. We believe Health Care is a Human Right.

The pandemic showed us again, what I learned after the Great Recession of '08. Losing your job meant losing your health insurance and affordable health care except this time it was during a global pandemic when you needed health care coverage the most.

My husband lost his job of over 20 years when Spencer Press closed in '09. He couldn't find another full-time job and when our youngest child turned 18, we were kicked off MaineCare. We were 53 years old with many preexisting conditions and no health insurance. We needed prescription medications to keep my husband out of the hospital. And doctor visits and counseling appointments and now we have health care bills in collections. When you are taking care of your loved one who is ill, you don't have the energy and time to apply for financial assistance. In case you didn't know,

being poor is a full-time job, trying to survive takes all of your time and energy.

In 1995, while my husband had his living wage job with good benefits, he became critically ill and almost died. He was in the hospital on and off for 2 months and was out of work for 6. Because of the lack of income and all the medical co-pays and the deductibles, we had to go bankrupt. No one should have to declare bankruptcy over medical bills.

I have a friend who had a great living wage job until she developed cancer. She lost her job, her insurance and her house because of medical expenses but she is alive today and cancer free. Survival shouldn't mean financial ruin.

Health Care is a Human Right. Yes, it would be wonderful and easier if the federal government would do this for all the states but it hasn't. Maine people can't wait any more for health care they can afford. And I think I remember my parents telling me, "As go Maine, so will go the Nation". Maine has been leading the way for a long time and we can't stop now. I ask you as a person of faith, please vote ought to pass on LD 1045.

Thank you for your time.

Patricia E. Kidder
4 Carpenter St.
Springvale, ME 04083-1109

patty_kidder@hotmail.com
207-502-9667 (C) 207-324-8995 (H)