

Steve Turner
Mechanic Falls

Ladies and gentlemen of the HCIFS Committee:

We Americans stagger under the burden of carrying a healthcare industry that is far more expensive than the rest of the world's, that isn't anywhere near the best, and that doesn't even cover everybody.

Even ignorant savages — even the headhunters of the South American rain forests, even the cannibals of the New Guinea jungles — EVEN THEY had the decency and humanity to care for each other during catastrophic illness or injury. We Americans have a healthcare industry that leaves foreclosure and bankruptcy in its wake.

We could drive our American healthcare costs way down by eliminating private health insurers altogether — thereby vastly pruning administrative costs — and by bargaining down bloated pharmaceutical drug prices.

I have no sympathy for insurance-mongers, pill-peddlers, and hospital administrators who claim expanding Medicare/Medicaid wouldn't pay them enough to cover healthcare costs. Bullshit.

We live not 100 miles from a country — half a continent — where doctors and nurses draw handsome salaries from a healthcare system that costs half — that's right, you heard me — half of ours. That country is called Canada. And 57 other countries have universal healthcare systems in which everybody has access to high-quality healthcare, no one goes bankrupt due to catastrophic illness or injury, and no one loses their home. All of them do it for less money than we Americans do.

Let's have ONE streamlined system that gives EVERY Mainer access to high quality, affordable healthcare. The money we save can be used to retrain displaced employees — insurance-mongers, pill-pushers, and administrative personnel — and put them to work doing something useful.

We have infrastructure that needs rebuilding, don't we? Roads, bridges, internet capacity, etc., that need maintaining and upgrading? Problem solved.

Because our American healthcare industry — I refuse to dignify it by calling it a system — our American healthcare industry, as it stands today, is absurd. It is beyond stupid. It is dysfunctional.

A loose, clattering, clanking medical-industrial complex, designed by Rube Goldberg, assembled by MacGyver, grinding out quick-fix, reactive, factory-based, assembly-line-style medicine, in which the patient is no more than a bagful of symptoms plus a checkbook. Just look at the financial ruin and human carnage this merciless, soulless machine leaves in its wake.

The passing of LD 1045 would be a giant step toward replacing this American medical disaster with something better.

Thank you.