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Testimony of Representative Poppy Arford in support of
LD 47, An Act To Fund the State's Free Health Clinics
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, I am Poppy Arford, Representative of District 49 in Brunswick, writing in support of **LD 47, An Act To Fund the State's Free Health Clinics**.

LD 47 will offer first-time state funding for Maine's free health care services clinics, including the Oasis Free Clinic in Brunswick. Our community has seen firsthand the tremendous need and benefits of these facilities. In 1995, Oasis began as a clinic to care for the homeless in our local shelter. Since then, Oasis has grown in response to the need in the Mid Coast, now offering a primary care practice, prescription assistance and a free dental clinic. Without state or federal funding, our clinic manages primarily through donations and volunteer efforts, providing care to those with few or no resources, including many who are working without insurance or with inadequate insurance.

One of my constituents shares this story: "Several years ago, my 40-year-old son had a very severe dental problem and was in a low-paying job without insurance. I had never seen him in such pain! He was often unable to go to work and it was even affecting his personality. So he went to Oasis and it was equal to lifesaving for him. I do not know what would have happened if not for their help. It saved his job and his well-being. Since then, he has progressed to a great job and now has health insurance. Finding Oasis was like a miracle."

Like my constituent, I believe that our clinics provide extremely valuable, often life-changing support for those without resources for their care, care that will often prevent more serious, costlier problems if left untreated. To make sure that these important clinics continue to serve those most in need in our communities, I ask that you vote LD 47 ought to pass. Thank you!