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## Testimony of Representative Michael Brennan in Support of LD 47, "An Act To Fund the State's Free Health Clinics" February 10, 2021

Good afternoon Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. I am Representative Michael Brennan, and I represent part of the City of Portland. I am here today to introduce LD 47, "An Act To Fund the State's Free Health Clinics."

This bill will provide needed basic funding for free clinics across the state, but I will focus my remarks on the Portland Free Clinic, because it is the one with which I am most familiar. I have been on the board of the Portland Community Free Clinic for the past five years. Its mission is to provide high quality healthcare at no cost to those in the community who lack health insurance. Traditionally, the population served is in the 'donut hole' – people who earn too much to qualify for MaineCare, but not enough to afford effective health insurance without a large deductible. They are largely working people, but they are the working lower paid whose employers don't provide health insurance.

The population they serve has changed somewhat and grown in the past year due to the pandemic, with people coming in who had lost jobs that had provided them with health insurance.

Using the Portland Community Free Clinic as an example, these clinics are an extremely cost-effective way of providing hundreds of people in Greater Portland with primary care. They run largely on volunteers and donations and have a very small annual budget to cover salary for four part-time staff who provide case management, volunteer coordination and other essentials. Everything else is donated.

In short, Maine's free clinics are a very efficient means of providing health care to a population that really needs it, and whose needs and numbers have grown due to the pandemic. Please vote that LD 47 ought to pass.

Thank you very much for your consideration. I would be glad to answer any questions.