

Edward Miller
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Good morning Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Ed Miller and I am a retired public health professional living in Hallowell. I am writing you today in support of LD 343 An Act to Set Aside Funds from Federal Block Grants for Certain Communities.

For 14 years of my public health career (beginning in 1973) I worked as a Division Director in what is now the Maine CDC. I had direct oversight of the Federal Preventive Services Block Grant and worked with colleagues on the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant distribution. I am supporting this legislation because there are decades of evidence that the process for determining how Federal Block Grants have been distributed has not addressed the serious health issues of Tribal communities in Maine. This exclusionary process has occurred in all types of administrations... Republican, Democratic and Independent.

It is impossible to discuss underserved and at risk communities in Maine without including Tribal health on and off the reservation. Yet distribution of these Federal funds in Maine has managed to largely ignore this population for far too long. It is time for change.

Without intervention by you, the health policy arm of State Government, taking a stance to change the current system, little will change. Please take the time to seek information on the following:

- how these block grant funds are being spent
- who are the recipients
- what percentage of funding actually goes to community organizations
- how are funding decisions and priorities established
- who participates in the decision making process
- how is the current system advancing or restricting progress toward health equity and reducing health disparities

Thank you for your consideration of these points.