

PO Box 360
Wilton, ME 04234
April 12, 2021

March 24, 2021

Senator Claxton, Rep Meyer and honorable members of the Health and Human Services committee. My names is Jan Collins and I live in Wilton.

I am writing in support of [LD 718](#) **An Act To Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Closing Coverage Gaps in the MaineCare Program and the Children's Health Insurance Program.**

I am a rural Mainer. We are often under represented in discussions about new Mainers. I would like the committee to know that rural Mainers care about our immigrant neighbors. We sponsor exchange students. We have groups that meet monthly to speak conversationally, just to insure that Spanish speaking skills are not lost. And, n the past we have organized around easing the difficulties for newMainers.

I have lived in Maine all my life. As a Mainer I have been both a recipient and a provider of the generosity of Maine people. When my mother, a single parent was temporarily disabled from a workplace injury the neighbors lined up to ensure that we had casseroles to eat. In Maine, we help our neighbors stack their wood. We stop when there's a disabled vehicle to ask if help is needed. We have bean suppers for community members that have cancer. We bring food, clothing and sometimes offer shelter to those who have suffered a fire.

New Mainers are our neighbors in need. The services provided to indigent Mainers should be extended to new Mainers and those who desire to be new Mainers. Helping others is a Maine tradition.

Several years ago, I had the pleasure of welcoming two young women seeking asylum from Afghanistan to our community. In Afghanistan, they would have been subjected to an arranged marriage to an older man without their consent.

They were lucky to receive excellent legal services and gained asylum in the US. They chafed at reliance on the generosity of others and were elated to receive their green cards. Able to find employment, they went on to work their way through college and will soon achieve degrees in accounting and statistics. They will add much to our community and our economy.

Please support [LD 718](#) **An Act To Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Closing Coverage Gaps in the MaineCare Program and the Children's Health Insurance Program.**

Many thanks,

Jan M. Collins

Jan Collins
East Wilton

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