

April 14, 2021

Greetings Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. I am writing to express my support for LD #718. My name is Allison and I am a resident of Buckfield and a volunteer in the immigrant community in Lewiston. Most importantly to this testimony, however, I am a mother of young children who I would do absolutely anything to keep safe and healthy.

The immigrant parents and grandparents I know feel the same about their families, and they have made the traumatic sacrifices that we privileged moms rarely have to. They arrive in Maine with nothing. Those who are seeking asylum legally cannot work for at least a year. They need time--to settle, to secure housing and food, to learn the culture and language, and to navigate the onerous legal process of immigration. Many of them need to learn to read and write. None of them are responsible for our immigration policies and procedures: They are simply trying to keep their families safe and alive.

All of them need healthcare.

This bill will provide the crucial peace of mind that comes with knowing they can access medical providers and services, especially for routine and preventative care. We must alleviate this major source of stress, fear and uncertainty for our new neighbors.

It is crucial that our communities welcome and nurture newcomers, and it is abhorrent that many of them cannot access the same health coverage other low-income Mainers enjoy. We have precious few opportunities to encourage, welcome and ease the minds of large groups of our neighbors. This bill will do that. It will literally save lives.

Please support LD #718. Thank you.

Allison Long
Buckfield, Maine