

Nils Tcheyan
Orrs Island

Honorable Members:

My name is Nils Tcheyan and I live on Orrs Island in Harpswell. 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. Maine has welcomed immigrants in recent years and they are already contributing to our state, working as the backbone of some of our biggest industries like health care and food production.

A few years ago, a new immigrant to Maine had a medical problem and I was able to accompany him to the urgent care to help translate for the staff and for him to be able to understand what care was being suggested. Fortunately for him at that time, a local organization supporting immigrants in Brunswick provided for the financial cost of his health care, and he was treated and recovered. I have often thought of this experience particularly as the pandemic has spread and ravaged our communities, and access to health care and especially treatment for the Coronavirus is essential for all of our health.

Immigrants contribute in many ways to our communities and help build a brighter future for all of us. They contribute about 62 million in state and local taxes, and many have started businesses and helped create and retain jobs in our state.

LD 718 would provide immigrants to Maine with the same basic rights to healthcare that Mainers voted for in 2017. We voted for this to expand care to low income Mainers who didn't have it. This bill would provide needed coverage for a group of low income Mainers that were excluded. We need to make sure that all Mainers are able to take care of their health and the health of their families. A healthy community includes everyone, no matter where they came from, as they are our neighbors, friends and coworkers.

I urge you to vote ought to pass for LD 718.

Nils Tcheyan
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