

LD 1608 An Act To Expand The MaineCare Program To Cover All Citizens Of The State

Testimony In Opposition

Public Hearing May 10, 2021

Members of the Health and Human Services Committee:

My name is Jessica Sullivan, I am a health professional and I write to oppose LD1608 which would force a single payer health care program on all residents of Maine. The administration and finance of all MaineCare (Medicaid), Medicare and Affordable Care Act (ACA) programs would be transferred to a single payer plan called MaineCare for All.

This bill proposes an astounding administrative and financial takeover of medical plans in Maine to be completed in four phases “no later than January 31, 2025.”

My concerns include the following:

1. Only one state has ever enacted a single payer system. Vermont, a liberal state with a small population of 626,000 enacted “Green Mountain Care” in 2011. “In its first year, Green Mountain Care cost \$4.3 billion, and financed in part by \$2.8 billion in new state taxes, a 151% increase in state taxes.” *
2. Green Mountain Care was abandoned in 2014 due to escalating costs.
3. As mentioned above, only one state has ever enacted a single payer plan which was abandoned in three years due to cost. No state-run single payer plan exists. MaineCare for All proposes implementation of a single payer plan in four years without adequate research and without any successfully functioning example.
4. There is no projection of costs or identification of any method to assess and project costs of the plan.
5. There is no indication of ongoing funding sources for the plan.
6. There is no indication of the administrative structure or of oversight of the plan after implementation in 2025.
7. There is no indication of how provider rates would be established and whether access to care would be negatively affected under the plan.
8. There is no reference to the plan’s effect on worker’s compensation, state employee and teacher health plans, on employer self-funded plans and on retirement health plans.
9. A significant federal hurdle is the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA); a single payer plan may be in violation of ERISA; this is not addressed.
10. I am a Medicare recipient who paid into the system for years and I also purchase a commercial Medicare supplement. I am absolutely against any attempt to capture my federal Medicare funds or to raise my taxes in order to help create and impose a single payer plan in Maine.

Please vote LD 1608 “ought not to pass”.

Thank you,

Jessica Sullivan, BS, MPH

*Kaitlin Hunter and David Kendall, “Single-Payer Health Care: A Tale of 3 States”, *Third Way*, July 17, 2019.