



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN MAINE

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Good afternoon, my name is John Hennessy testifying in support of LD 199 – An Act to Improve the Health of Maine Residents by Removing Exclusions to the MaineCare Program on behalf of the Episcopal Diocese of Maine.

The Episcopal Church recognizes the fundamental human rights of all people as expressed in our Baptismal Covenant and we reaffirm that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights applies to all refugees and both regular and irregular migrants.

We believe that all Maine people, no matter where they come from, should have access to affordable healthcare and should be able to see a doctor when needed. Exclusions based on immigration status are unfair and short-sighted, and they harm our community health.

We remember that Mary, Joseph, and Jesus were refugees, as they were forced to flee into a foreign land to escape violence.

Without health coverage, many low-income immigrants must wait until a condition becomes an emergency to get care, further endangering their health and putting added stress on our overburdened emergency departments. Children's access to health care improves when their parents have health coverage. Children's physical, mental, and emotional health are impacted by the wellbeing of their caretakers – whole families need care to thrive.

The Episcopal Church stresses the importance of demonstrating hospitality and welcome as Christian values at the local level. LD 199 continues Maine's work of improving access to health care that started with Medicaid expansion, making our healthcare system more equitable and our workforce more resilient. Immigrants are essential parts of Maine's communities and our future. It's time we honor their human right to health care and pass this bill.