

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

My name is Cheyenna Baldwin. I live in Auburn. I'm a single disabled mother of a seven year old and a twelve year old. I am testifying in favor of LD 996.

All my life people have always said that I have a beautiful smile. When I started to smile less, and hide my smile people would ask "why?" Which is hard and embarrassing to explain. How can a person truly explain why they don't smile?

I'm currently living with several broken and missing teeth. I can't afford to get the treatment I need and I can't afford dental insurance. As a result, my teeth have become brittle, weak, and infected. I'm constantly in pain all of the time. The pain can be so unbearable, it causes me to cry constantly. Sometimes it takes hours before I can get any type of relief. Due to lack of dental insurance and no money, I'm currently unable to fix my teeth. All I want is a beautiful smile.

I also have several medical problems that affect my teeth. I have kidney disease, with this disease I often get sick and put on antibiotics, which also affects my teeth and gums. It's very dangerous for my teeth to be in poor condition.

It doesn't just affect my physical health. It also affects my mental health. It makes it hard for me to get well and stay well. I am very involved in my community. I am a dedicated advocate. I'm a recovery coach, a loving mother, and friend to many. I could be doing so much more if I wasn't struggling so much with my physical health, mental health, and especially with my dental health.

Having better access to dental insurance will not only help me fix the very few teeth that I have but it will also help with my other medical problems. I will be able to build my self-esteem and self-worth back up. I'll also be able to do more good things in my life, which is what I live for.

Please think of the people like me, and the thousands like me, when considering this bill. Please also be so kind to support LD 996. It would not only change my life but the lives of a lot of adults that struggle just like me here in Maine. We just want beautiful and handsome smiles too!! Health care is a human right. We all deserve to have a fulfillment life too. Only how can i/we when we have broken infected damaged smiles? Please consider this bill, and help us have beautiful/handsome smiles.