

Testimony to the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee in Support of LD 837

Monday, April 9, 2018

Good afternoon Senator Hamper, Representative Gattine, and the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs. I am writing to you in support of LD 837: An Act To Provide Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Operations of State Government.

My name is Donna Galluzzo and I'm the executive director of Frannie Peabody Center in Portland. We are the state's largest community-based HIV/AIDS organization providing comprehensive services for those affected by HIV/AIDS. We work with a significant number of clients who receive health care through Medicaid.

As we all know, more than 70,000 eligible Mainers are waiting for health care. We implore the Legislature to exercise your authority and obligation to the people to uphold this expansion, and in doing so, to provide necessary care for tens of thousands of Mainers waiting to receive services.

In the decades-long fight against HIV/AIDS, we have witnessed, firsthand, the destruction caused by the denial of health care services. Those that we serve have been stigmatized, ostracized and penalized as a population undeserving of their right to medical services simply because of who they are, who they love, and where they come from.

There are Mainers deserving of and in need of care who are being denied for no ethical, acceptable or legal reason. To deny the people's vote and to continue to deny care to qualifying Mainers is an unethical and unacceptable denial of human rights.

When the people make a choice through exercising their rights in an unencumbered and free voting process, there is no other choice than for our government to uphold the decision of the people.

We urge our State Legislature to act ethically, responsibly and democratically by upholding the rightful voice of your statewide constituents through the implementation of Medicaid expansion. It has also been shown that access to Medicaid for underserved populations results in a significant cost savings of expensive emergency department visits, resulting in a potential fiscal benefit (along with our \$140 million revenue surplus) offsetting the cost of expansion.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Donna Galluzzo