

## Testimony “FOR” LD 1397 by Joe Lendvai

Brooklin, ME 04616

Before the Joint Select Committee on Insurance and Financial Services  
Maine State Legislature, Augusta ME

May 3, 2011



Joe Lendvai, Brooklin ME

**Representative Priest’s bill, LD 1397, “An Act to Establish a Single-payor Health Care System...” proposes to make the fundamental changes needed by creating a system that covers everyone, and is affordable and sustainable. ([Read more...](#))**

Senator Whittemore, , Members of the Committee: I’m Joe Lendvai, a retired owner of a small business. I live in Brooklin, in Hancock County. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of LD 1397.

I don’t think that there is disagreement in this room that health care costs have become a runaway train. We’re unable to control them -- not as individuals, not as businesses and apparently not as government. And even a mega-company like General Motors is struggling to pay the over \$5 billion dollars annually for their employees health care. And there is no relief in sight.

Unless we change the system. I mean **fundamentally change how we pay** for health care, and **how much** we pay for health care. And I could add, how **efficiently** we run our health care system here in Maine.

**Representative Priest’s bill, LD 1397, “An Act to Establish a Single-payor Health Care System...” proposes to make the fundamental changes needed by creating a system that covers everyone, and is affordable and sustainable.** In my view, the bill has 4 key features.

1. It focuses on health care for people by providing **uniform access** to health services for every Maine resident. We all know that it is not the case today.
2. The bill establishes a simple and fair mechanism regarding payment, a straightforward **premium** to be paid by every Maine resident to an independent health care trust fund; the initial estimate is 9% of gross adjusted income.

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3. The bill ***separates employment from health care***. Individuals, not employers, will be responsible for their personal health care premiums. Imagine what economic stimulus this decision will mean to our state.
4. This single payer bill will **do more with less** because of reduced administrative costs, negotiated drug and medical supply costs, elimination of insurance overhead and profit, and by minimizing fraud. And because it covers everyone, health care becomes a human right; a human right which in turn, perhaps surprisingly, allows the thousands of businesses in our state to be more competitive.

In summary, this bill, through its simplicity of design and sense of fairness will provide affordable, quality health care to every resident of Maine.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, in preparing for this hearing I read the brief biographies of the members of this committee. You're an impressive group: community leaders, business people, teachers, insurance executives, attorneys – people who made critical decisions concerning the lives of others. An affirmative vote in support of LD 1397 would be such a critical and positive decision for the people of Maine. I urge each of you, Republicans and Democrats to vote for LD 1397. Thank you.