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Testimony in Support L.D. 1272

An Act to increase access to low-cost prescription drugs.

Thank you Senator Sanborn, Representative Tepler and distinguished members of the Health Coverage, Insurance & Financial Services committee for giving me the opportunity to submit my testimony on this important bill. I want to thank President Troy Jackson for presenting and Senator Ned Claxton, Representative Ryan Fecteau, Representative Victoria Foley, Speaker Sara Gideon, Representative Ann-Marie Mastraccio, Senator Marianne Moore, Representative Annye Perry, Representative Denise Tepler and Senator Eloise Vielli for cosponsoring this bill.

My name is Deb Violette. I am the President and founder of Free ME form Lung Cancer. The only nonprofit based in Maine dedicated solely to raising money for research, helping high risk uninsured patients get access to early lung cancer screening and helping single family low income homeowners get access to radon air abatement systems.

I am a member of the advisory board for the Maine Lung Cancer Coalition, member of the Maine Cancer Foundation, International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer and I have been a member of the Dana Faber Cancer Institute LungSPORE a National Cancer Institute research program since 2013. I am submitting testimony in opposition of L.D. 1272 "An Act to Increase Access to Low Cost Prescription Drugs.

As the President of Free ME form Lung Cancer I know first hand the cost of medicine and the obstacles that patients must jump in order to be treated or help a family member access prescription drugs. I do not believe that importing drugs that are not federally approved and inspected by the United States Government. I do not stand alone in this opposition. The National Sheriffs Association, the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators as well as healthcare professionals and regulators to name a few.

Although it appears to be a good idea there are several risks involved in importing prescription drugs not to mention the amount of medicine that other countries would need to supply us with enough medication to support our communities. Canada currently has over 1700 drugs that they are in shortage of. They import most of their supply and have little control over the supply. Further, Canada has the second highest drug prices in the world (safemedicines.org)

The risk of importation is high. Counterfeit medication is evident. If you recall Kris Thorkelson from Manitoba Cancer who sold counterfeit cancer medication. Counterfeit

cancer medication that was administered to trusting cancer patients here in the United States. Treatment that is supposed to instill hope and a renewed future was destroyed by one mans greed.

We had an agreement with Canada but was shut down by a federal judge after testing a blood thinner and found it was counterfeit. We can't afford to import drugs from countries that the United States cannot regulate. The risks are too high. I hope that you will see that L.D. 1272 is not a good idea and will not be good for Maine's people. We need drugs that are effective, not tainted with or watered down versions of the lifesaving medications our citizens need and deserve. I hope you see the dangers as we have and oppose this bill.

Thank You,
Deb Violette, President and Founder
Free ME from Lung Cancer

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