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State Senator Joe Rafferty and Health Care Advocates Call to Lower Costs and Improve Health Care for Mainers

Health Care Advocates—“beacons on top of the lighthouse”—Join Protect Our Care on the Nationwide “Lower Costs, Better Care” Bus Tour to Demonstrate the Urgent Need to Lower the Cost of Prescription Drugs



Portland, Maine - This afternoon, Protect Our Care’s “Care Force One” arrived in Portland to demonstrate the need for lowering Mainers’ health costs, expanding coverage, and reducing racial disparities in care. Headlined by State Senator Joe Rafferty, Laura Packard, Stage 4 cancer survivor and health care activist, and Kate Ende, from the Consumers for Affordable Health Care, the event highlighted how Democrats are leading the charge to advance American

health care and held Republicans accountable for continuing to reject measures to improve care and lower costs for Mainers.

Read **Protect Our Care's** new report: **Lower Costs, Better Care for Mainers** [here](#).

Throughout the nationwide "[Lower Cost, Better Care](#)" bus tour, Protect Our Care is fighting to ensure critical health care measures supported by President Biden remain in upcoming budget reconciliation legislation. These priorities include giving Medicare the power to negotiate for lower drug prices for all Americans, getting more Americans covered by closing the Medicaid gap, expanding Medicare benefits to include hearing, dental, and vision, and further reducing health care premiums for millions of Americans who purchase coverage on their own.

You Can Watch the Event [Here](#).

"Most of us are one unplanned medical need away from a financial crisis that may impact our family for generations," said **State Senator Joe Rafferty**, who is also a football coach and retired school teacher, which keeps him close to his local community. "This year, the legislature passed the COVID-19 Patients Bill of Rights, which is a start but our legislators must continue this fight in May to lower health care costs and improve quality. But we can't do it alone: Please keep the pressure on us to keep fighting for you. Be consistent and let's push this bus the many thousands of miles it will go."

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, we've seen how the coverage programs under the ACA including the Marketplace and Medicaid expansion have been a lifeline for thousands of Mainers, including the nearly 82,000 Mainers who now have extended coverage," said **Kate Ende**, from Maine-based Consumers for Affordable Health Care. "We must address underlying drivers of health care costs, including unaffordable prescription drugs, especially for seniors and other vulnerable communities. We must put the interests of people above those of drug companies, because we are all better off when we have access to the health care we need."

"When I was fighting stage 4 cancer, I had to forgo medication that would boost my immune system because the price tag was simply too high. I wound up in the hospital, and nearly died. Sadly, stories like these are all too common in our country," said **Laura Packard**, Stage 4 cancer survivor and health care activist. "Patients should be able to focus on getting well, not struggling to pay for medications. That's why we need Congress to act now to lower the cost of prescription drugs, including allowing Medicare to negotiate prices on behalf of all Americans. Too many Americans suffer and too many Americans die everyday because they cannot afford the drugs they are prescribed."

Tomorrow, "Care Force One" will head to Burlington, VT, where Protect Our Care will be joined by Rep. Peter Welch, State Rep. Taylor Small (Director of Health & Wellness Pride Center of Vermont), and APRN Sarah DeSilvey. For more information, please visit protectourcare.org/bus-tour/.

The Protect Our Care “Lower Costs, Better Care” Bus Tour is making stops in:

Bangor, Maine on Monday, August 9, 2021
Portland, Maine on Monday, August 9, 2021
Burlington, Vermont on Tuesday, August 10, 2021
Concord, New Hampshire on Wednesday, August 11, 2021
Teaneck, New Jersey on Friday, August 13, 2021
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania on Thursday, August 12, 2021
New York, New York on Friday, August 13, 2021
New Brunswick, New Jersey on Monday, August 16, 2021
Scranton, Pennsylvania on Monday, August 16, 2021
Burlington County, New Jersey on Tuesday, August 17, 2021
Wilmington, Delaware on Tuesday, August 17, 2021
Dover, Delaware on Tuesday, August 17, 2021
Morgantown, West Virginia on Wednesday, August 18, 2021
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on Wednesday, August 18, 2021
Youngstown, Ohio on Thursday, August 19, 2021
Columbus, Ohio on Thursday, August 19, 2021
Milwaukee, Wisconsin on Friday, August 20, 2021
Madison, Wisconsin on Friday, August 20, 2021
Parkersburg, West Virginia on Monday, August 23, 2021
Charleston, West Virginia on Monday, August 23, 2021
Raleigh, North Carolina on Tuesday, August 24, 2021
Charlotte, North Carolina on Tuesday, August 24, 2021
Columbia, South Carolina on Tuesday, August 24, 2021
Atlanta, Georgia on Wednesday, August 25, 2021
Savannah, Georgia on Wednesday, August 25, 2021
Orlando, Florida on Thursday, August 26, 2021
Tampa, Florida on Thursday, August 26, 2021
Denver, Colorado on Monday, August 30, 2021
Flagstaff, Arizona on Tuesday, August 31, 2021
Phoenix, Arizona on Tuesday, August 31, 2021
Tucson, Arizona on Wednesday, September 1, 2021
San Diego, California on Thursday, September 2, 2021
Anaheim, California on Thursday, September 2, 2021
Las Vegas, Nevada on Friday, September 3, 2021