November 1, 2018

Hon. Chellie Pingree
2162 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Pingree:

I’m writing to respond to your October 30 letter, which was sent to my office via email on November 1.

As far as the substance of your letter, we obviously disagree on whether states or the federal government should take the lead in the regulation of health insurance. I do not shy away from having been a vocal opponent of the ACA, in part because I am a firm believer that states can and should be leading the way in finding and implementing solutions to the problems that face our citizens.

Your statement that the lawsuit that I joined would “nullify” any protection for pre-existing conditions is inaccurate and misleading. Long before the ACA, Maine law had significant protections in place for people with pre-existing conditions (we also had guaranteed issue and community rating). If the ACA were repealed tomorrow, Maine people would still have their state law protections for pre-existing conditions, just as they would still have guaranteed issue and community rating. Obviously, these insurance benefits come at a financial cost through higher premiums, but those are the decisions that policymakers in Maine have made.

Prior to the implementation of the ACA, Maine’s insurance cost far less than it does now. Our 2011 law creating the reinsurance (invisible high-risk pool) pool was effective in further lowering costs, but the ACA ended that program and replaced it with a temporary, one-size-fits-all federal program. Fortunately, this year the Trump Administration saw the benefit and granted our waiver request to reimplement the reinsurance pool. We implemented the pool in time for today’s opening of the marketplace, and Mainers shopping for healthcare on the exchange will see that their costs have finally fallen due to our efforts.

Citizens have more control and influence over their state lawmakers than they do over their representatives in Washington, and I support the efforts of other states to make policy decisions closer to home, which is why I joined the lawsuit you oppose.
As a former state lawmaker who held office in the Maine Senate after this became statutory requirement in Maine, I am surprised that you have not been assuring the Maine people that their healthcare rights for coverage of pre-existing conditions are not threatened by a repeal of the ACA. I find it disconcerting that a sitting lawmaker would scare her constituents just to score a political point for her Democrat candidate friends.

Lastly, I do not recall if you have ever communicated to my office previously, but Maine’s federal delegation generally find it useful to send written communications to the attention of my assistant, Stephanie Ham, at [email protected]

Sincerely,

Paul R. LePage
Governor

Cc: Nanette Diaz Barragán, Member of Congress
    Mike Quigley, Member of Congress
    Grace F. Napolitano, Member of Congress
    Judy Chu, Member of Congress
    José E. Serrano, Member of Congress
    Jan Schakowsky, Member of Congress
    Carolyn B. Maloney, Member of Congress
    Betty McCollum, Member of Congress
    Zoe Lofgren, Member of Congress
    Scott H. Peters, Member of Congress
    Gerald E. Connolly, Member of Congress
    Alan Lowenthal, Member of Congress
    Dina Titus, Member of Congress
    John K. Delaney, Member of Congress
    Pramila Jayapal, Member of Congress
    Peter DeFazio, Member of Congress
    Norma Torres, Member of Congress
    Nydia Velázquez, Member of Congress
    Bradley S. Schneider, Member of Congress
    Mark DeSaulnier, Member of Congress
    Jacky Rosen, Member of Congress
    Barbara Lee, Member of Congress
    Adriano Espaillat, Member of Congress
    Robin L. Kelly, Member of Congress
    Seth Moulton, Member of Congress
    Luis V. Gutiérrez, Member of Congress
    Terri Sewell, Member of Congress
    André Carson, Member of Congress
    Bennie Thompson, Member of Congress
    Steve Cohen, Member of Congress
    Sheila Jackson Lee, Member of Congress
    Marc Veasey, Member of Congress
    Darren Soto, Member of Congress
    Raúl Grijalva, Member of Congress
    Mark Pocan, Member of Congress
    Frederica Wilson, Member of Congress
    Tom O’Halleran, Member of Congress
    Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Member of Congress
    Marcy Kaptur, Member of Congress
    Gwen Moore, Member of Congress
    Stacey E. Plaskett, Member of Congress
    Wm. Lacy Clay, Member of Congress
    Donald S. Beyer Jr., Member of Congress