

**United States Senate**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 20, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Orrin Hatch  
Chair, Senate Finance Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
Ranking Member, Senate Finance Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senators McConnell, Schumer, Hatch, and Wyden,

I write to express serious concern about H.J.Res. 124, the continuing resolution and Children's Health Insurance Program authorization extension, which executes drastic cuts to the Prevention and Public Health Fund, to a total of \$6.35 billion. As the Senate works to fund the government and reauthorize a critical guarantor of child health, I encourage you to avoid further cutting the PPHF from current levels.

Prevention remains one of the key means by which our nation can combat public health outbreaks and emergencies. Prevention is also very cost effective—while the nation at large spends \$3 trillion annually on health care, less than 3 percent of this amount is dedicated to prevention and public health. The federal government plays a critical role in managing the public health.

Prevention and public health efforts are particularly crucial for states like Maine with a substantial rural component. Research from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has indicated that rural areas of the United States bear higher rates of all manner of conditions, from higher infant mortality to greater rates of death from heart disease, cancer, lower respiratory diseases, and stroke. In many cases, the costs to treat preventable conditions that advance to chronic disease are 7 (or more) times those of preventive measures.

Maine has received \$39 million from the PPHF since 2010, and these funds have gone to support evidence-based community prevention activities specifically tailored to meet local needs and preferences. For example, in FY 16 alone:

- Maine received approximately \$75,000 for tobacco use prevention. This money was then used to air the CDC's *Tips from Smokers* campaign, yielding a 443 percent increase to 1-800-QUIT-NOW in the first week alone.
- Maine received \$1.2 million in grants for the Maine CDC to help program and coordinate four CDC programs (diabetes; heart disease and stroke; nutrition, physical activity, and obesity; and school health) that work to prevent chronic diseases by addressing common risk factors, particularly among youth and critical populations.
- The Epidemiology and Lab Capacity Grants provided Maine with \$641,429 to support the ability of local health departments to prevent, detect, and respond to infectious disease outbreaks.
- The state Department of Health and Human Services received \$1.68 million to improve access to vaccines, both to children and adults.
- The Preventive Health and Health Service block grant provided Maine with \$1.56 million, allowing Maine to address its own unique public health challenges in innovative and locally determined fashion.

Under the terms of H.J.Res. 124, Maine stands to lose \$14.8 million over the next five years, a cut of more than half the amount previously budgeted. This will severely hamper efforts to provide for Mainer's' public health and wellbeing.

There is an old saying that used to be more common than it is now: "Let's not be penny-wise and pound-foolish." When it comes to the health of Mainer's and, indeed, all Americans, being penny "wise" on prevention will result only in dollar-foolish spending of several times more money to treat the more serious resulting conditions.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Angus King". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Angus" and the last name "King" clearly legible.

Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator