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March 5, 2026

The Honorable Senator Henry Ingwersen
The Honorable Representative Michele Meyer
Committee on Health and Human Services
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: Testimony in support of LD2122: An Act to Prevent Negative Impacts from Federal Funding Changes to and Fund Eligibility Determinations and Outreach for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Dear Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Committee on Health and Human Services,

Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program (MCHPP) offers dignity and empowerment by providing all members of our community with access to healthy food. Aside from offering groceries and meals to households from thirteen of Maine's counties, MCHPP also offers SNAP application and renewal assistance as a SNAP outreach partner. Every day we see families struggling to make hard financial decisions, and programs like SNAP provide access to healthy food while reducing the financial burdens on Maine families. That is why I am writing today on behalf of MCHPP to testify in support of LD2122.

First, the creation of a contingency fund would provide the state an incredible safety net. Our neighbors cannot afford the loss of their SNAP dollars and Food Pantries like ours cannot sufficiently fill the gap, meaning more Maine families would find themselves food insecure if federal funding is delayed or disrupted. When SNAP funding was threatened in November 2025, MCHPP saw an increase in households accessing our services to prepare for potential loss of SNAP and an influx in new families contacting us to learn about our resources if they found themselves in need. When asking families about the change, many told me that they could afford the necessary groceries with SNAP, and with it they did not need services like MCHPP. Although ultimately not required in November, the preventative measures families took demonstrate that SNAP helps many Mainers remain food secure without need for the charitable food network.

We also support the implementation of an error rate reduction system. Accurate eligibility determinations are a fiscal responsibility for the state and a matter of stability for our clients. When errors occur, families often face sudden benefit cut-offs, forcing them to rely more heavily on our already strained pantry and meal programs. By utilizing advanced methods to identify root causes of errors, the State can minimize its share of costs while ensuring families receive the exact support they are entitled to. With its current payment error rate, Maine is at risk of having to pay about \$35 million for the state match starting in October 2027. In the long run, reducing the error rate will reduce the state's financial burden for maintaining SNAP.

Finally, as a SNAP outreach provider, we work with hundreds of individuals who qualify for SNAP but face barriers to enrollment — technology gaps, language barriers, or navigating complex eligibility requirements.

Community - Food - Dignity

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Outreach providers help households navigate those complexities, which has been especially important with so many new eligibility guidelines and changes in 2025 and 2026. The help we offer households is broad - educating community members on SNAP eligibility and requirements, helping individuals understand the letters they receive from OFI, and completing applications or renewals in-person or over the phone. LD 2122's provision to establish a SNAP Outreach Grant Program is essential to this work. By providing matching funds for community-based organizations to complete SNAP outreach, this bill ensures that:

- Outreach is conducted by trusted community partners who understand local needs.
- Communication with SNAP recipients is improved, reducing the likelihood of households losing benefits due to missed paperwork.
- Federal dollars are maximized to support Maine's economy and food security infrastructure.

LD 2122 is an investment in the health of our communities and the efficiency of our state systems. It empowers organizations like ours to reach more people and ensures that the Department of Health and Human Services has the tools necessary to manage SNAP effectively in a changing federal landscape.

We urge the Committee to vote 'Out to Pass' on LD2122. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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