

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD

TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FIVE

**JOINT RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT FAMILY CAREGIVERS IN
MAINE**

WHEREAS, Americans are living longer than ever before, and Maine is on the leading edge of this trend; and

WHEREAS, Mainers are predictably living healthy, productive lives into their 80s, 90s and 100s; and

WHEREAS, the majority of older Mainers wish to remain in their homes and communities as they age; and

WHEREAS, a quarter of older adults will need care and support as they age, and the majority of them will want to receive this care in their homes and communities; and

WHEREAS, eighty-three percent of the help provided to older adults in the United States comes from family members, friends or other unpaid caregivers, and nearly half of all caregivers who provide help to older adults do so for someone with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia; and

WHEREAS, a family caregiver can be a spouse, partner, adult child, other relative, friend or neighbor who has a significant relationship with, and who provides a broad range of assistance to, an adult dealing with the challenges of age, illness, injury or chronic or disabling conditions; and

WHEREAS, currently, there are 166,000 family caregivers in Maine; and

WHEREAS, family caregivers in Maine provide an estimated 155,000,000 hours of unpaid care annually, which can be valued at nearly \$2,920,000,000; and

WHEREAS, family caregivers spend, on average, more than \$7,200 out of pocket annually in caring for their loved ones; and

WHEREAS, approximately 51,000 family caregivers in Maine are caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease, providing an estimated 87,000,000 hours of unpaid care annually at a value of \$1,911,000,000; and

WHEREAS, dementia caregiving involves many hours over a long period of time, and the demands of dementia caregiving often result in physical and mental health problems among caregivers themselves; and

WHEREAS, the demand for family caregivers will increase as the United States population ages, and the prevalence of Alzheimer's disease will continue to rise significantly, nearly doubling by 2050; and

WHEREAS, the Maine State Legislature has passed various provisions into law in support of family caregivers, including the Alzheimer's disease and related dementia state plan, the Respite for ME program and the paid family and medical leave benefits program; and

WHEREAS, family caregivers often work full-time or part-time while providing care for a loved one, while others are forced to leave the workforce, for a period of time or permanently, to provide care; and

WHEREAS, Maine is missing out on over \$1,000,000,000 per year in additional economic activity as a result of family caregivers dropping out of the labor force due to care challenges; and

WHEREAS, the ratio of potential family caregivers to the growing number of those who need care has already begun a steep decline; and

WHEREAS, the number of personal support specialists, certified nursing assistants, personal care attendants and home health aides cannot meet the current or projected demand for care in Maine, and this shortage results in family caregivers leaving the workforce temporarily or permanently; and

WHEREAS, the lack of available supports and services for older people, such as Meals on Wheels, Adult Day Services and housing with services, challenges older people who wish to remain at home and their caregivers to find the help they need; and

WHEREAS, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine report that the need to recognize and support family caregivers is the most significantly overlooked challenge facing the United States; and

WHEREAS, Maine must find ways to support family caregivers in their efforts to provide care to loved ones, allowing Maine citizens to safely and comfortably age in their own homes, helping to preserve communities and avoiding the expense of institutional care; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Thirty-second Legislature now assembled in the First Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, support the review of state policies and programs for their effectiveness in addressing the needs of family caregivers, professional caregivers and the loved ones they care for and recognize February 21, 2025 as National Caregivers Day; and be it further

RESOLVED: That a suitable copy of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to the Department of Health and Human Services.