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JOINT RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT FAMILY CAREGIVERS IN MAINE

WHEREAS, the population of Maine is aging and Maine currently has the highest median age in the country; and

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

WHEREAS, providing care in homes and communities is less costly than providing care in institutional settings; 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 178,000 family caregivers in Maine; and

WHEREAS, family caregivers in Maine provide an estimated 165,000,000 hours of unpaid care annually, which can be valued at nearly \$2,220,000,000; and

WHEREAS, family caregivers spend, on average, between \$6,954 and \$11,923 out of pocket annually in caring for their loved ones; and

WHEREAS, 69,000 family caregivers in Maine are caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's disease; and

WHEREAS, the Maine Legislature has passed various provisions into law in support of family caregivers, including the State Plan for Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias in Maine; an Act To Allow a Patient To Designate a Caregiver in the Patient's Medical Record, informally known as the CARE Act; and the Maine State Housing Authority's home accessibility modification tax credit; and

WHEREAS, the United States Senate and United States House of Representatives are currently considering proposed federal legislation, The Credit for Caring Act of 2017; and

WHEREAS, in January 2018, President Trump signed into law the RAISE Family Caregivers Act, which was supported by Maine's entire congressional delegation; and

WHEREAS, family caregivers often work full-time or part-time while providing care for a loved one, without access to paid family leave, while others are forced to leave the workforce, for a period of time or permanently, to provide care; 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, direct care workers, certified nursing assistants, personal care attendants, home health aides and certified geriatricians cannot meet the current or projected need in Maine; and

WHEREAS, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine reports 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 Twenty-eighth Legislature now assembled in the Second 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 and their loved ones and recognize November as Maine Family Caregivers Month and encourage Maine citizens to participate in activities related to National Family Caregivers Month; and be it further

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