



**Elder Abuse**  
Institute of Maine

Testimony of Patricia Kimball on Behalf of the Elder Abuse Institute of Maine

To the Committee on Judiciary

In favor of LD 564: An Act to Improve Access to Civil Legal Services

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Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Patricia Kimball, and I am the Executive Director for the Elder Abuse Institute of Maine, on behalf of which I submit this written testimony. The Elder Abuse Institute of Maine (EAIME) is a statewide organization committed to ensuring that all older Maine people impacted by abuse have access to the resources, services, and support they need to live the lives they choose. Toward this end, my agency often works in partnership with Maine's civil legal service providers to ensure that older age and lower income do not prevent our clients from receiving appropriate legal counsel in situations of eviction, financial exploitation, elder abuse, age- or disability-based discrimination, and more.

I am writing in support of LD 564, An Act to Improve Access to Civil Legal Services, and asking the Legislature to increase funding for these programs. With growing needs for civil legal assistance, additional investment is critical to ensuring that Maine's most vulnerable people have equal access to justice.

Advocates in EAIME's Elder Service Connections program routinely support clients by making referrals to and working alongside the seven civil legal aid providers in Maine, an unsurprising situation given that a 2010 study by the University of Maine Center on Aging found that up to [half of all older adults in the state would need legal assistance](#) within the coming decade. These organizations and their attorneys have helped to improve the lives of older adults across the state in innumerable ways – they've helped clients secure legal protections from abusive family members, sought reasonable accommodation from a landlord so that a client might continue to age in place, ensured that an older New Mainer could access the benefits necessary for his dementia care, supported a 90-year-old facing eviction and homelessness, and tackled other complex legal situations that many older Mainers experience.

LD 564 would provide critical funding to bolster support for Mainers of *all ages* faced with legal issues that threaten their most basic human needs – including health care, housing, and safety – but who would be unable to secure legal services without the assistance of Maine’s civil legal aid providers. With gratitude for our civil legal aid partners and in the belief that there is no justice without equal access to justice, the Elder Abuse Institute of Maine respectfully asks that you vote “ought to pass” on this legislation.