



Testimony before the Committee on Health and Human Services
LD 1522 An Act to Provide Economic Justice to Historically Disadvantaged Older Citizens by Amending the
Laws Governing the Medicare Savings Program
April 20, 2023

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and Members of the Committee:

I am Rev. Jane Field, the Executive Director of the Maine Council of Churches, an ecumenical coalition of seven member-denominations and two associate member congregations who together represent 437 local churches in Maine with 55,000 parishioners in their care. I am testifying on behalf of the Council **in support of LD 1522.**

As is the case nationwide, a majority of the members of Maine churches are over the age of 60, and many of them live on fixed income near or below the poverty line. So, LD 1522 would benefit “our” folks.

But here’s something else that’s true about the members of churches that are part of the Maine Council of Churches, *no matter their age*: our guiding principles include loving our neighbors as ourselves; seeking to fulfill the requirements of doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly; and standing in solidarity with the marginalized, the vulnerable, the outcast, and the oppressed. We don’t always live up to these principles, but they are our moral compass. And so, we support LD 1522, not just because it would help “our own,” but because it would help Mainers who have experienced a lifetime of exclusion from education, employment, advancement, and equal pay—older Mainers who are part of the BIPOC and LGBTQ communities, who are living with a disability, and who are women. Because they have faced decades of bias, these neighbors (within and beyond the church) are more often economically disadvantaged in later life than those who have had advantages.

LD 1522 proposes to significantly increase eligibility for the Medicare Savings Program – a program that puts real money into the pockets of low-income older people, including and especially those who have lived on the margins for many years. LD 1522 would help create a more just, equitable, and compassionate community here in Maine.

For these reasons, the Maine Council of Churches urges you to vote Ought To Pass on LD 1522. Thank you.

Jane Field
Maine Council of Churches
LD 1522

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