

Testimony on LD 1522 “An Act to Provide Economic Justice to Historically Disadvantaged Older Citizens by Amending the Laws Governing the Medicare Savings Program”

My name is Kerry Faria, and I am the Medicare Coordinator for SeniorsPlus in Lewiston, one of the five Agency’s on Aging in the state serving Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford counties, and the statewide provider of care coordination for those seeking to remain in their homes. The goal of SeniorsPlus is to assist people to age well so that they can stay at home independently as long as possible.

I am writing in support of LD 1522, An Act to Provide Economic Justice to Historically Disadvantaged Older Citizens by Amending the Laws Governing the Medicare Savings Program.” This bill makes 3 changes to the Medicare savings program:

1. It removes the asset test.
2. It changes the income eligibility methodology by setting the federal poverty level at income levels established using the Elder Economic Security Standard Index.
3. It eliminates the specified low-income Medicare beneficiary as a category.

This legislation would dramatically impact Maine’s seniors and individuals with disabilities. The cost of heating alone in the State of Maine is higher than 2/3 of the rest of the United State just based on geography. Because we are a rural state our costs of transportation are also higher just to meet basic needs like groceries and medical care. If the State of Maine were to adopt LD 1522, doing so would allow more vulnerable seniors to stay at home longer which means less stress on State and housing systems. Since living at home is a basic right and the desire of all of us, this legislation would enable more Maine seniors to enjoy this basic right. The changes recommended would make a big difference for many Maine community members who are older or living with a disability.

I ask you to approve LD 1522.

Thank you.