

**TESTIMONY OF THE MAINE IMMIGRANTS' RIGHTS COALITION (MIRC)
Regarding L.D. 1522: An Act to Provide Economic Justice to Historically Disadvantaged
Older Citizens by Amending the Laws Governing the Medicare Savings Program**

Sponsor: Representative Jess Fay

Public Hearing: Thursday, April 20, 2023 at 1:00pm

Dear Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Tobin Williamson and I am the Advocacy Manager with the Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition (MIRC), a statewide network of almost 100 member organizations working to enhance the lives of Maine's immigrant communities. MIRC works to advance systemic changes in Maine through collaborative advocacy to ensure that voices of the state's large, diverse, and growing immigrant communities are heard.

Maine's low-income older people already face challenges such as high costs of heating oil, lack of access to public transportation, and exorbitant housing prices. In the immigrant community, older people and people with disabilities often face added challenges, such as language access, separation of family members, and/or traumatic displacement from the place they once called home. Additionally, far too many of Maine's residents face a lifetime of challenges due to bias and discrimination in areas such as housing, employment opportunities, and equal pay.

By adopting L.D. 1522 and increasing eligibility for the Medicare Savings Program, life would become a little easier for folks who are struggling. Other states have already adopted the policies detailed by L.D. 1522, and we hope that Maine will join them. MIRC is proud to join our partner organizations such as the Maine Council on Aging, AARP Maine, Equality Maine, and the Maine Center for Economic Policy in supporting L.D. 1522 and hopes you will do the same.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this important issue.

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