

Thomas Wood
AARP Maine
LD 2084

To: The Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations.

RE: LD 2084 – An act to provide funding for essential services for victims of crimes.

Date: Friday, January 26, 2024

Dear Friends:

I am writing to you today on behalf of myself and AARP Maine in support of the passage of LD 2048 – An act to provide funding for essential services for victims of crimes.

My wife served as a paralegal for Legal Services for the Elderly some 30 years ago. She would frequently share the plight of some of her clients and the exceedingly tough times they faced, particularly those who were physically and financially abused. For most of these clients there was nowhere else for them to turn. Legal Services for the Elderly provided these victims just the right amount and kind of services they needed to legally stop the abuse they were being subjected to and helped connect them with other community based support services. As they emerged from the causes of their abuse and victimization.

Right across the street from us lived a single elderly woman who worked multiple jobs her entire life just to keep her head above water. As she got older her ability to cope with understanding the complexities of Medicare and MaineCare led her to rely upon the advice and guidance of so-called friends who did not have her best interests in mind.

Informally the whole neighborhood began to turn out to fix the roof, shovel snow, do common repairs to plumbing and electrical problems as well as provide food for her and her pet cat. All of this community support made it possible for her to remain in her home for a long time.

There came a point, however, when she needed legal guidance concerning her participation in Medicare and MaineCare as well as help concerning her legal affairs. Well intentioned neighbors were simply not sufficient.

Legal Services for the Elderly was exactly what she needed.

The elderly and other victims by the very nature of the acts that make them victims are often those pushed to the very fringes of our communities.

The \$6,000,000 embodied in LD 2084 is a small investment to support these vulnerable citizens and to help prevent pushing them further toward the very fringe and often into a void where hope is gone, and help cannot find them.

I urge you to pass LD 2048. AARP Maine urges you to pass LD 2084.

Sincerely,

Thomas C. Wood
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