

Michael Edgecomb
Randolph
LD 2217
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Written Testimony of Michael Edgecomb submitted to the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs regarding LD 2217, An Act to Strengthen the Maine Veterans' Homes with Increased and Ongoing Funding

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, my name is Michael Edgecomb. I am a resident of Randolph, Maine, a native of Aroostook County, and a US Navy- Vietnam Era Veteran, and Maine National Guard Veteran. I respectfully submit my written testimony for LD 2217, An Act to Strengthen the Maine Veterans' Homes with Increased and Ongoing Funding

I urge your support of this bill and its final passage.

Now more than ever the State of Maine needs facilities for the care of our aging population, and this is especially true for Veterans. The struggle to find beds for assisted living facilities in Maine continues. Within the last decade, 23 nursing homes in Maine have closed. Nursing home beds in Maine have decreased from 10,000 in the mid-1990s to less than 6,400. The disappearance of nursing home beds pushed more Mainers with higher medical needs into less intensive residential care facilities.

The VA estimates that there are 114,000 Veterans in Maine, with 57,792 over age 62 or 50.69%. Of these, it is estimated there are 48,000 Vietnam Veterans in Maine, most of them in their 60's and 70's. By 2030 it is estimated there will still be approximately 48,000 veterans over age 65 and approximately 40,000 in 2035 (1)

The need for Veteran Homes is as strong as ever in the light of the current crisis, and the need for our citizens and veterans will continue in the foreseeable future.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

(1) https://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/State_Summaries_Maine.pdf

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