

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee:

My name is Diane Whitmore. I am a retired teacher from RSU #5 in Freeport. I am from Ellsworth originally and live in Orono now. My father, Jack Whitmore, was a resident of the Maine Veterans Home in Scarborough for the last four months of his life. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army from the World War II era. When it became evident that he could no longer live independently and was in need of skilled care, our family was very fortunate that the Maine Veterans Home in Scarborough could accommodate him.

His first day there, he was upset and confused. The staff responded very compassionately and caringly. Within a few days, he was content and comfortable. The staff quickly got to know him and would talk about his interests: his Army experience, his teaching career, and professional sports, especially football since it was football season at the time. And equally importantly, the staff got to know me and my brothers as well. They were cordial, prompt, and thorough with their communications. I was particularly impressed by the attendance at a meeting of his care team that one of my brothers and I attended. Administrators, nurses, dietary staff, and activities staff were all in attendance. It was clear that my father was being well cared for.

The night it was clear that my father's passing was imminent, the staff called and my brother and I came quickly. The staff cared for us as much as they did him, checking on us, bringing us coffee, and allowing us to stay late into the night past visiting hours to be with him when he passed and when his body was removed. At the moment of removal at about 1:30 a.m., all the nursing staff on duty formed an honor guard and escorted my father's body, me, and my brother out of the home for the last time. They showed us all as much caring and respect after my father's death as they had during his life.

Although one of my brothers lives in California, my other brother lives in Falmouth, very convenient to Scarborough. At the time of my father's stay at the Maine Veterans Home there, I lived in Portland, also very convenient to Scarborough. It made a difference in my father's well-being that one or both of us was able to visit every day. The presence of Maine Veterans Homes throughout the state is equally important. Families in Aroostook and Washington counties, where Maine Veterans Homes are located in Caribou and Machias, care equally for their loved ones as do families in Cumberland and York counties. The veterans of Aroostook and Washington counties deserve the same respect and care as those in more populated parts of the state. Therefore, I urge this committee to fully fund the Maine Veterans Homes as a show of gratitude for those veterans' service. The United States, and the state of Maine, owe them nothing less. Thank you.

Diane Whitmore
Orono
LD 2217

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee:

My name is Diane Whitmore. I am a retired teacher from RSU #5 in Freeport. I am from Ellsworth originally and live in Orono now. My father, Jack Whitmore, was a resident of the Maine Veterans Home in Scarborough for the last four months of his life. He was a veteran of the U.S. Army from the World War II era. When it became evident that he could no longer live independently and was in need of skilled care, our family was very fortunate that the Maine Veterans Home in Scarborough could accommodate him.

His first day there, he was upset and confused. The staff responded very compassionately and caringly. Within a few days, he was content and comfortable. The staff quickly got to know him and would talk about his interests: his Army experience, his teaching career, and professional sports, especially football since it was football season at the time. And equally importantly, the staff got to know me and my brothers as well. They were cordial, prompt, and thorough with their communications. I was particularly impressed by the attendance at a meeting of his care team that one of my brothers and I attended. Administrators, nurses, dietary staff, and activities staff were all in attendance. It was clear that my father was being well cared for.

The night it was clear that my father's passing was imminent, the staff called and my brother and I came quickly. The staff cared for us as much as they did him, checking on us, bringing us coffee, and allowing us to stay late into the night past visiting hours to be with him when he passed and when his body was removed. At the moment of removal at about 1:30 a.m., all the nursing staff on duty formed an honor guard and escorted my father's body, me, and my brother out of the home for the last time. They showed us all as much caring and respect after my father's death as they had during his life.

Although one of my brothers lives in California, my other brother lives in Falmouth, very convenient to Scarborough. At the time of my father's stay at the Maine Veterans Home there, I lived in Portland, also very convenient to Scarborough. It made a difference in my father's well-being that one or both of us was able to visit every day. The presence of Maine Veterans Homes throughout the state is equally important. Families in Aroostook and Washington counties, where Maine Veterans Homes are located in Caribou and Machias, care equally for their loved ones as do families in Cumberland and York counties. The veterans of Aroostook and Washington counties deserve the same respect and care as those in more populated parts of the state. Therefore, I urge this committee to fully fund the Maine Veterans Homes as a show of gratitude for those veterans' service. The United States, and the state of Maine, owe them nothing less. Thank you.