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AARP Maine Testimony in support of LD 51 An Act to Increase Oversight of Fatalities of and Serious Injuries to Adults Subject to Public Guardianship

Greetings Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Committee On Health and Human Services. My name is Bridget Quinn, Associate State Director of Advocacy and Outreach for AARP Maine.

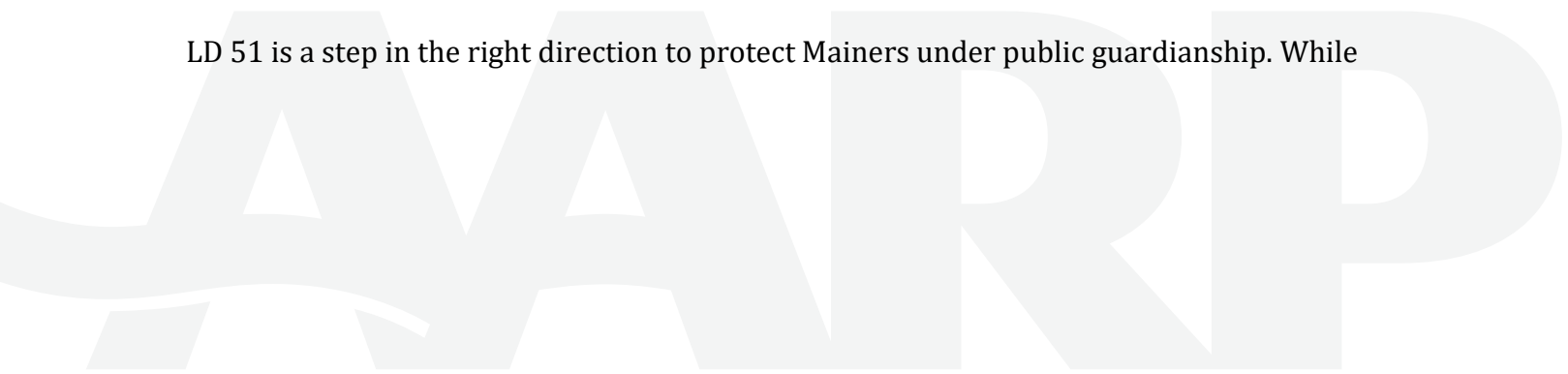
AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. On behalf of our nearly 200,000 members statewide, thank you for the opportunity to share testimony today. We thank Representative Shagoury for bringing forward this bill and will be offering testimony in support of LD 51.

LD 51 will require the Aging and Disability Mortality Review Panel to expand their membership to include a member of the general public with lived experience as an adult receiving services among other members. LD 51 also requires the Panel to review all deaths and serious injuries of adults subject to public guardianship regardless of whether they are enrolled in a home or community-based service program.

The goals of LD 51 are admirable and seek to expand protection to some of our most vulnerable Mainers. AARP continuously fights to support Maine's vulnerable seniors who rely on legal guardians and others to help them make vital decisions. While Maine has the "gold standard" of guardianship laws in the Uniform Guardianship, Conservatorship, and Other Protective Arrangements Act, the very nature of guardianship means that we all need to be vigilant to ensure that vulnerable seniors are not abused, bad guardians are held accountable, and the courts can do their jobs.

While supportive of LD 51, AARP's policies seek to ensure that guardianships should always be an option of last resort. Adults placed under guardianship lose their basic civil liberties. These can include making decisions about where to live, how to spend money, and what medical treatment to receive. We will continue to work with policymakers to ensure Mainers under guardianship are able to maximize their independence while also receiving the protections of guardianship. There is still work to be done.

LD 51 is a step in the right direction to protect Mainers under public guardianship. While



public guardians serve a necessary and important role, their clients are some of our most vulnerable citizens. It directs Maine policy towards protections in line with policy recommendations established by delegates from the National Guardianship Summit. That is why we urge you to support LD 51. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today, if you have further questions for me I can be contacted at bquinn@aarp.org or at 207-272-8563.

Thank you,
Bridget Quinn
AARP Maine

