

LD 327 – An Act to Provide Additional Funding to Support In-home Personal Support Services for Qualified Senior Citizens

Testimony of John Brautigam, Esq. for Legal Services for Maine Elders Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

March 12, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services.

My name is John Brautigam, and I am here today on behalf of Legal Services for Maine Elders. LSE provides free legal help for Mainers aged 60 and older when their basic human needs are at stake.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 327 and increased funding for in-home personal support services for qualified beneficiaries.

As you are aware, in-home personal support services provide essential assistance to older adults who need help with daily activities such as bathing, dressing, meal preparation, medication management, and mobility. These services enable older Mainers to remain in their communities, maintain their independence, and avoid costly and often undesirable institutionalization in nursing homes.

Unfortunately, funding has not kept pace with the increasing demand for these services. Many lowincome seniors who qualify for assistance face long waiting lists, inadequate caregiver availability, and insufficient support hours to meet their needs. Without stable and adequate funding, folks are left struggling to manage alone or are forced into institutional care. Even the best assisted housing or nursing home facilities represent a downturn in the well-being of many of the individuals forced to leave their homes. They are also more expensive for taxpayers.

Expanding funding for in-home personal support services is not just a matter of compassion, it is sound fiscal policy. Studies consistently show that providing care in the home is significantly more cost-effective than nursing home placement¹. The average annual cost of home care is a fraction of

¹ The cost of an "Aging in Place" program was significantly less than nursing home care in one recent study. Marek KD, Stetzer F, Adams SJ, Popejoy LL, Rantz M. Aging in place versus nursing home care: comparison of costs to Medicare and Medicaid. Res Gerontol Nurs. 2012 Apr;5(2):123-9. doi: 10.3928/19404921-20110802-01. Epub 2011 Aug 17. PMID: 21846081.

March 12, 2025 Legal Services for Maine Elders – LD 327 Page 2

the cost of institutional care, and investing in these services now will reduce the financial burden on Medicaid and other state resources in the long term.

Increased funding would also help stabilize the workforce of home care aides, ensuring that caregivers receive fair wages and can continue providing these essential services. You know very well that workforce shortages are a growing crisis in the long-term care sector, and without action, our most vulnerable citizens will face even greater difficulties accessing the care they need.

I respectfully urge you to prioritize the needs of older Mainers by adding funds for in-home personal support services. Doing so will allow more seniors to age in place, maintain their independence, and receive the dignified care they deserve.

Thank you.