

March 14, 2025

Senate Chair Ingwersen, House Chair Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

My name is Heidi Stoddard, a resident of Lewiston, Maine and am also a full-time caregiver for my mom living with Alzheimer's Disease. I write to testify in support of L.D. 815, an Act to Provide Funding for Respite Care and Supplemental Services Provided by the Family Caregiver Support Program.

In 2017, It had become apparent my mom's capacity was degrading fast. My husband and I decided it was in moms' best interest to move her into our home so her medical, dietary, and financial needs were being properly managed as her mind and capacity were quickly degrading.

Unfortunately, we figured out rather quickly she needed more eyes on supervision then we had originally anticipated, and she was still quickly declining in cognitive health.

In 2021, I stepped down from my very demanding but rewarding career of over 20 years to provide my mom with the full-time supervision and daily care she was requiring. We also moved backed to Maine, to at least have the support of some family while I navigated the very challenging days I have ahead of me. As the only daughter to my mother and the only individual in her life to step up and take care of her every need, I have been forced to give up my career and put the needs of my husband and I aside, for the health and safety of my mom.

My husband has to work twice as hard to make up my lack of income. Anytime we wish to spend together outside of our home requires planning, arrangements and often times out of pocket costs, to just go out to eat, before we even get to walk out the door! Even with careful planning and proper arrangements, last minute situations arrive with behaviors or outbursts that require me to return home.

I am now on 8 years of full-time in-home care and support for my mom without any respite or financial support. 4 years of not even being able to work, due to the daily care and needs of my mom.

Any support that can be given for myself and other caretakers could truly make a difference in our everyday lives! Shutting ourselves from the outside world and social lives with our spouses, Family and friends is detrimental to our healthy living and our abilities to continue caring for our loved ones who would otherwise possibly be a burden on the state.

Thank you,

Heidi J. Stoddard