



**Written Testimony of Jess Maurer on Behalf of
the Maine Council on Aging to the
Committee on Judiciary**

**LD 1027 – An Act to Strengthen the Law
Regarding Relief for Improvident Transfers of
Title**

Written Testimony Provided on March 24, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary.

My name is Jess Maurer, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA). The MCOA is a broad, multidisciplinary network of over 140 organizations, businesses, municipalities, and older community members working to ensure we can all live healthy, engaged and secure lives with choices and opportunities as we age at home and in community settings. I am testifying in favor of LD 1027.

According to the Office for Victims of Crime, almost 90 percent of the elder abuse incidents with a known perpetrator, the perpetrator is a family member. Of these, two-thirds of the perpetrators are adult children or spouses. This statistic should guide your decision-making in this bill.

It is a normal part of the human experience to form trusting relationships with our friends and family. We expect these people to act in ways that honor that trust, especially when we have diminished capacity or are dependent on them for our care. Unfortunately, in rare instances, a trusted family member or friend manipulates our trust for personal gain. A perpetrator may play on the fear we have of dying in an institution or losing our home, and offer daily care in exchange for transfer of a house. This can sound reasonable to a person who needs care but who cannot find or afford it. Who doesn't want to believe a child or good friend has our best interest at heart in this proposition? And, of course, most do.

When a victim transfers a home in a situation like this, they are often transferring their only asset. It may take some time for the victim to be evicted from their own home, or left with no care, or find themselves confined to a room. These are situations that are not only breaches of law, but also breaches of trust that break a human code – we do not take advantage of people who are dependent upon us for care and support, we just don't. While a court can undo the transfer and get the property back for the victim, paying attorney's fees to secure this result adds insult to injury and further depletes whatever emotional and financial stores the victim has.

There can be no doubt that there is a public interest in deterring this kind of activity, especially since this is most often carried out by a family member. Allowing for the award of attorney's fees is one way to ensure the public interest is served. Please vote in favor of LD 1027.

Thank you. Jess Maurer