

Dear Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

My name is Terri Pedone. I am a volunteer advocate with AARP Maine and I live in South Portland. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of LD 814 or "Older Mainers Act."

First let me give you a brief snapshot of my background as both a health care professional and an advocate. I am a retired registered nurse in both hospital and home care settings. I have experience as a hospice volunteer and was a volunteer advocate for five years with The New Jersey Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman. Currently, since moving to Maine three years ago, I am a volunteer advocate at the Barron Center in Portland, in addition to my volunteer advocacy role with AARP Maine.

As you know, LD 814 is an act to provide funding to Area Agencies on Aging for community-based services and programs to support older adults in Maine. This translates into actionable services and programs that will provide older adults in Maine with:

- Access to ongoing resources and essential direct-care services.
- Support for their caregivers.
- The right kind of community support that can help them stay in their homes if they want to and avoid having to go to a long-term care facility.

As we look toward a growing population of older people, including in the state of Maine, two things are certain: today's older generation wants to stay in their homes as long as possible (according to AARP, nearly 90%), and to help ensure this, more community-based services and resources are needed.

As both a nurse and volunteer, I've seen firsthand the pros and cons of institutional living in a long-term care facility. Even in the best of such care facilities, long-term care residents can often lose their sense of belonging and purpose, and connection to community, friends and family. And as you already know, it is enormously costly – whether through private pay or public funding, at federal and state levels.

That's why LD 814 is an alternative worth your consideration for keeping older people in their homes and in their communities for as long as possible. It makes good people sense and good business sense too.

I hope you will consider supporting it. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

