

## Testimony in Support of LD 814

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee – my name is Judy Methot, and I am a new member of the Southern Maine Agency on Aging. I submit this testimony in support of LD 814, “An Act to Provide Funding to Area Agencies on Aging for Community – based Programs to Support Older Adults.

I was introduced to Southern Maine Agency on Aging (SMAA) in 2023 while attempting to navigate Medicare rules and regulations for my 90-year-old mom. In my profession I read and interpret tax statutes daily. None the less I felt it necessary to seek advice due to the complexity and nuances that come with choosing a Medicare plan. The volunteer at SMAA was knowledgeable, professional, and patient. In the end, we saved my mom over five hundred dollars a month. That five hundred dollars was life changing in my mom’s ability to age in place. Home maintenance and heating costs had become increasingly difficult due to rising inflation. I could not help but think of the number of elderly individuals like my mom who are paying thousands of dollars unnecessarily due to the complexities of Medicare enrollment rules, and how a short visit with the amazing volunteers at SMAA could change their lives as well.

As I learned more about the other services and programs provided by SMAA, I was impressed by how laser focused they were on meeting the most essential needs of the elderly population in Southern Maine. Their emphasis on nutrition, financial counseling, and social well-being were exactly the areas my mom and her community of friends expressed as their most pressing needs to maintain their independence and age well at home. I thought to myself at the time, “this is an organization that gets it, and does something about it.” More importantly, all their services are delivered with the upmost respect and integrity.

I completely understand 9.7 million dollars is a big ask in the current budget environment. I can assure you, however, from what I have seen first-hand, it will be money well spent. The impact these agencies have on our communities and their members is immeasurable and a sound investment in the future of elderly populations around our state.

I strongly encourage you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 814.

Thank you,

Judy Methot