

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Karen Foxwell and I live in Northport, ME. Thank you for the work you all do to represent Mainers from across the state.

I am the Board Chair of Spectrum Generations, also known as the Central Area Agency on Aging, serving the residents of Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Somerset, and Waldo Counties. I am here today to testify in strong support of LD-814 *which I will refer to as the Older Mainers Act*

You have heard statistics relating to this bill such as:

52% of single, older Mainers lack money to pay for their basic needs

Currently there are at least 600 people on WAITING lists for meals on wheels across the state.

AARP estimates that 61% of family caregivers are also holding down a job. Many caregivers, however, must leave the workforce when their caregiving responsibilities get too overwhelming. Currently there are well over 150K caregivers in this state. They need support!

As a Board Member and volunteer, I have seen, firsthand, the positive impact that services, like Meals on Wheels, have on our community. When I used to deliver meals, I got to know the people on my route. All were grateful for the food, but many also just wanted to talk to another human being. I knew that more times than not, I would be the only person they encountered that day. There have been many stories of drivers who have found

clients in serious medical crisis's and were able to literally to save their life!

Also, as you know, many assisted living facilities in Maine have been closing their doors over the past several years. What you may not realize is that **IF** the Agencies on Aging services can keep just 103 older Mainers out of the Medicaid-Funded nursing homes for one year, The Older Mainers Act will pay for itself!

Supporting the Older Mainers Act ensures that every older Mainer has access to essential benefits, community, and services, **AS WELL AS** allowing them to stay in their home if they choose. They have been there for us, now it's time for us to be there for them!

I urge you to support **AND FUND** the Older Mainers Act and help us continue to provide these vital services to our older residents. Doing so will improve the lives of older adults in Maine for generations to come.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to bettering the lives of Mainers.