

Don Cross

Maine Veterans' Homes – Augusta
35 Heroes Way
Augusta, ME 04330

April 1, 2025

Representative William Bridgeo
Senator Matthew Pouliot
Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services
132nd Maine Legislature
Cross Building, Room 209
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Representative Bridgeo, Senator Pouliot, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Don Cross, and I am a proud resident of Maine Veterans' Homes in Augusta. I served in the United States Air Force from 1955 to 1959. I completed my training in Biloxi, Mississippi, and was then stationed in Boron, California, in the Mojave Desert—a very remote place that is now a prison. I served as a radar technician, spending about a year and a half in Boron before being transferred to San Clemente Island, located 60 miles off the California coast. Like Boron, it was a place of solitude. I finished my service in Charleston, Maine.

I was proud to make Staff Sergeant in less than four years—a proud achievement. I often say that everyone should serve, because the military teaches valuable lessons. You're taught that when you're given a command, it's not just busywork; it might be something that saves a life. That sense of responsibility sticks with you.

I'm writing to express my strong support for LD 182: *An Act to Require the Department of Health and Human Services to Establish MaineCare Reimbursement Rates for the Maine Veterans' Homes on a Per Resident Basis.*

MVH is an exceptional place to live. There's always something engaging to do—not just movies, but music, games, and interactive activities. When I was looking for a place, I visited several other nursing homes, and none of them compared to MVH. This place is roomy, spotless, and doesn't even feel like a nursing home. It's like a 5-star hotel. My friends and family agree. One even joked, "I think I'm going to join the Army just so I can move here when I'm older!"

The staff here are incredible. The activities director seems to have endless energy, and the whole team does an amazing job creating a warm, active, and caring environment.

However, maintaining this level of care requires adequate and consistent funding. As it stands, MaineCare does not fully cover the cost of caring for each resident. LD 182 would help ensure that MVH can continue offering high-quality care, retain its skilled and dedicated staff, and remain accessible to Veterans throughout Maine.

This issue matters deeply to me and to many others who call MVH home. I respectfully urge you to support LD 182 to help protect and sustain the Homes that care for those who have served.

Thank you for your time, your public service, and your thoughtful consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Don Cross

