

Testimony in support of LD 182
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Addison, Maine

My name is Cynthia Grant and I am a resident of Addison, Washington County. Today, I wish to express my strong support for LD 182.

This legislation is essential to maintaining the skilled staffing, specialized programs, and services that are tailored to the unique needs of the residents at our Maine Veterans' Homes. LD 182 would create a more accurate and fair reimbursement system by basing per resident payment rates on the actual care and service needs of the residents.

I speak to you today as the daughter of a WWII veteran and the current caregiver advocate for my mother, Julia Worcester, who resides at the Maine Veterans' Home in Machias.

My father was a proud to be a veteran, a long-time laborer, and a man whose family never required public assistance. When my mother was 49, after having worked more than 20 years in multiple factories and restaurants, and long before "non-traditional" students were common, went to college to become a teacher, believing that between their combined Social Security, savings, and her teacher's retirement, they could remain self-sufficient to their final hours.

Unfortunately, her efforts were undercut by the Windfall Elimination Provision. In 2003, when she 73 years old, she flew to Washington, D.C. to testify for its repeal at the request of Senator Susan Collins. Even though the provision was recently repealed, it's too late for my mother's benefit.

Today, at 94, she lives with dementia and is blinded by macular degeneration. Because her husband served his country, she resides at Maine Veterans' Home in Machias. The specialized care she receives is a direct result of his sacrifice. If he were alive, he would be overwhelmed with gratefulness and relieved that his service secured this support for her.

Despite her careful planning, she has outlived her finances, and her care is now partially covered by MaineCare. Not because she lived irresponsibly, but because none of us know how long we will live or how costly our care will be in the final years of our lives.

Dementia and blindness are cruel diagnoses, but my mother receives excellent and compassionate care. These facilities and their staff deserve to be well-supported and to have the resources they need to continue providing this level of service.

LD 182 is about ensuring that our Veterans' Homes can sustain quality care and attract and retain skilled staff. This is about doing right by those who did everything they could to provide for themselves, and for us.

My parents, and many others, did their due diligence. It is our turn. I urge you to support LD 182 and ensure that MaineCare reimbursement truly reflects the cost of care at Maine Veterans' Homes.

Thank you for consideration of my plea and for your service to the people of Maine.