



**Testimony of Marge Kilkelly on Behalf of
the Maine Council on Aging to the
Committee on Health and Human Services**

**In Favor of LD 1102 - Resolve, to Raise Awareness of the
Importance of Brain Health and Reducing the Risk of
Dementia**

Submitted April 1, 2025

Greetings, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Committee on Health and Human Services.

My name is Marge Kilkelly, and I am a Policy Consultant for the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA) which is a broad, multidisciplinary network of over 140 organizations, businesses, municipalities, and older community members working to ensure we can all live healthy, engaged, and secure lives with choices and opportunities as we age at home and in community settings. The MCOA is a unifying force across sectors that is creating a new narrative about aging and older people in Maine with the goal of building local, statewide, and national support for the systemic changes needed to support our new longevity.

I am testifying in favor of LD 1102 Resolve, to Raise Awareness of the Importance of Brain Health and Reducing the Risk of Dementia.

One aspect of ageism is the commonly held belief that cognitive decline is an inevitable aspect of aging. Older adults are often portrayed as cognitively and physically impaired and not being a community asset but a drain on resources.

We know from our work in Health Care Listening Sessions that too often health care providers also lack a full understanding of aging. When providers assume that a person is not able to relay accurate health status facts or follow instructions for care the patient is denied valuable input into their care or treatment plans.

This bill requests a small investment in a public awareness campaign that would improve the awareness of the importance of brain health and early detection of cognitive decline. The three key factors are risk reduction, early detection and diagnosis.

Risk reduction; while most people might say they would like to reduce their risk of cognitive decline, most do not know or even if that can be accomplished.

Early detection is critical to developing a treatment plan. That treatment plan might well be addressing dementia, but what if the cause of the symptoms is some other condition? Early detection is valuable in every aspect of health care and generally leads to better outcomes and higher quality of life. When patients and families are aware of the benefits of early detection they are much more likely to seek medical care earlier.

Early diagnosis coupled with information regarding support services significantly improves the quality of life for both patient and caregiver by providing more time for planning for care, improves the efficacy of treatment, helps people age at home longer, and improves the well-being of caregivers who need to deal with the physical and emotional challenges of the disease.

Providing quality, science based information about brain health to communities and health care providers is an important step forward as we move to eliminate ageism by 2030.

I urge you to act in support of LD 1102.

Thank you for your consideration.