

Testimony in Support of L.D. 1677 – Hannah Ritchie, ADPI Project Manager, Southern Maine Agency on Aging

My name is Hannah Ritchie and I serve as the Project Manager for the Alzheimer's Disease Program Initiative (ADPI) grant at Southern Maine Agency on Aging. In this role, I work daily to implement community-based strategies that support early detection, enhance quality of life, and improve care for individuals living with dementia and their caregivers. I strongly support L.D. 1677 because it would create a sustainable, coordinated public health infrastructure that ensures continued progress towards Alzheimer's disease-related efforts across our state.

While federal funding initiatives like the Building Our Largest Dementia (BOLD) Infrastructure Act and grants like the ADPI have helped to jumpstart work on dementia prevention and care in Maine, these efforts require long-term stewardship to be effective. Without state legislation to ensure the continuity of funding, promising initiatives can lose momentum as leadership shifts and years of development effort can be lost. Codifying the Maine Alzheimer's Prevention Program and the Healthy Brain Initiative Stakeholder Group ensures that diverse community partners have a formal platform to collaborate, advise, and hold systems accountable for updating and implementing the State Plan every five years. L.D. 1677 is a cost-effective, bipartisan step toward protecting the health and dignity of thousands of Mainers living with or at risk for Alzheimer's and related dementias.