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Testimony in support of LD 2021 An Act to Add an Online Option for Reporting of Suspected Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of Adults

Greetings Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Bridget Quinn, I am an Associate State Director of Advocacy and Outreach with AARP Maine. AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. On behalf of our nearly 200,000 members statewide, thank you for the opportunity to share testimony today. Today I am testifying in support of LD 2021.

LD 2021 is a helpful update to our current law that will better allow Mainers to report suspected abuse, neglect or exploitation of an adult. This bill brings alignment between Maine and federal regulations and will help protect older adults.

Ensuring that we have convenient methods to report suspected abuse is critical to combatting crimes related to elder abuse. Some studies have estimated that 1 in 10 older adults have experienced a form of abuse,¹ though this is an extremely difficult issue to measure, as only about 1 in 14 cases of suspected abuse is reported.² In addition to the direct consequences of the abuse, survivors of elder abuse experience higher rates of mental health issues (such as depression and anxiety) and earlier deaths than other older adults.³

With robust reporting mechanisms, we can begin to eliminate abuse, neglect and exploitation of vulnerable adults. This bill also brings the state in line with new federal requirements, ensuring that Maine will continue to be eligible for federal funds to provide protective services for vulnerable adults. I ask you support LD 2021 and thank you for the

¹ Acierno, R., Melba, A., Hernandez, A.B., Amstadter, H.S., Resnick, K.S., Muzzy, W., & Kilpatrick, D.G. (2010). "Prevalence and correlates of emotional, physical, sexual, and financial abuse and potential neglect in the United States: The National Elder Mistreatment Study." *American Journal of Public Health*, 100(2), 292-297.
² "Primary care physicians and elder abuse: current attitudes and practices." Wagenaar DB, Rosenbaum R, Page C, Herman S. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/21178151/> / *J Am Osteopath Assoc*. 2010;110:703-711.
³ "Elder Abuse: A public health issue that affects all of us," U.S. Surgeon General VADM Jerome M. Adams and Lance Robertson, ACL Administrator and Assistant Secretary for Aging, June 15, 2018. <https://acl.gov/news-and-events/acl-blog/elder-abuse-public-health-issue-affects-all-us-0>.

opportunity to testify today. If you have any questions for me I can be reached at bquinn@aarpp.org or at 207-272-8563.

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