



Testimony of Jessica Fay for
The Maine Council on Aging
January 14, 2026
In Support of LD 2051

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Jess Fay and I am the Policy and Advocacy Director for the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA), 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 support of LD 2051 An Act to Ensure Access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in Maine

In Maine we value the health and well-being of our neighbors. I have seen time and again people in my community and across the state step up in so many ways to make sure people have food. This bill is in line with those values. It maintains eligibility status for lawfully present immigrant groups who are no longer eligible for federal SNAP benefits because of the changes made in HR 1.

The population of older people in Maine who are immigrants has increased. According to Maine's [Healthy Aging Data Report](#)¹ 7% of Adults 65+ report speaking a language other than English at home. The proportion of new immigrants arriving in older age brackets (50+, 65+) has risen significantly since 2000, though recent data suggests this trend might be stabilizing or slightly reversing. Not all of the people in this demographic are affected by LD 2051, but there are lawfully present older people who will lose their access to SNAP benefits without the change proposed in this bill.

Older people face poorer health and increased chronic disease when they lack adequate nutrition. These chronic diseases include an increased risk of compromised immunity, bone loss which can lead to a higher risk of falling, slower healing from injury, cognitive decline, and increased depression and anxiety. These conditions can often create additional costs for our healthcare system due to increased utilization - and in the case of uncompensated care - and increase in the

¹ Dugan, E., Lee, C.M., Jansen, T., Song, Q., Su, Y.J., & Silverstein, N.M. The Maine Healthy Aging Data Report: 2025 Highlights. (www.healthyagingdatareports.org/maine-healthy-aging-data-report/).

costs that we all pay. We have all heard the phrase “food is medicine” and that is true for older immigrants as well.

This bill does not add new eligibility to Maine’s definition of who qualifies for state funded SNAP benefits, it simply allows people who currently are eligible to remain eligible. As a state we have made a commitment to feeding older people in need. This bill allows us to maintain that commitment.

Maine Council on Aging asks you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 2051. Thank you for the opportunity to share this testimony.