

Susan Hawes
Portland
LD 2212

Dear Chairs Rotundo and Gattine, Ingwersen and Meyer and members of the Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services, My name is Sue Hawes and I live in Portland. Today I am writing in neither for nor against LD 2212.

I sincerely thank the committees for your work in 2025 to allocate funding to Area Agencies on Aging that supports Mainers who wish to age in place. However, the current proposed supplemental budget includes no additional funding for services that support older Mainers who want to age in place. It is critical—for both older Mainers and the state's bottom line—that the supplemental budget include additional funding for services that help older Mainers age safely at home.

I was the caregiver for both of my parents and now for my disabled husband. I know the importance of services like Meal on Wheels for isolated seniors who need support in getting sufficient nutrition. I know caregivers who need their loved ones to have access to AAA day programs so the caregiver can attend to their own medical appointments and other needs. I know how much attending the Savvy Caregiver training at SMAAA helped me understand how best to support my husband who was disabled by cognitive impairment at age 47 after a lifetime of epilepsy.

The services offered by AAAs in Maine must be strengthened by state government financially to clear waiting lists for needy Mainers. Supporting older folks in their homes costs MUCH LESS than a nursing home, costing not just less to the state financially but also to the individual emotionally. Being supported at home is priceless.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Now is the time to invest in our aging population and support community members who have contributed to the state for their entire lives. I urge you to include additional, ongoing funding in the supplemental budget and make this smart, cost-effective investment in Maine's future.

Thank you,
Sue Hawes