

February 18, 2026

Hello Chairs Rotundo, Gattine, Ingwersen, Meyer, and members of the Committees on Appropriation and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services,

I am Jessica Linzer Simpson, an AARP volunteer and advocate residing in Cape Elizabeth. I want to address the omission of additional funding for Maine's five Area Agencies on Aging (AAA's) in the supplemental budget. I request that you consider providing this support because the need is great, the services provided are essential and I'm afraid without it their services will be cut.

I get it—I understand that the State is facing significant economic challenges. When the President signed the 2025 Budget Reconciliation Act, it meant Maine will lose billions of dollars of federal funds over the next decade; all while imposing or shifting additional costs to our State.

But, because the Triple A's help our most vulnerable Mainers, they are vital. Under the Older Americans Act; these agencies target and serve *those with the greatest economic and social needs in Maine*. In statute, *greatest economic need* means those living at or below the poverty line. *Greatest social need* is defined by those living with physical or mental disabilities; language barriers, and cultural, social or geographical isolation.

In my work as a fraud fighter for AARP, I learned that those living with everyday loneliness and in geographic isolation are also those most vulnerable to scams. But, the Triple A's have programs to combat this isolation. Examples: the volunteers who hand deliver Meals on Wheels and spend time with their recipient. Or those, like my friend Ruby, who became a friend via the phone pal program to a person with many needs that Ruby and staff helped rectify. Or those who volunteer in the adult day care for family members with cognitive difficulties. I'm sure every legislator knows a Mainer whose life was impacted positively by the myriad services the Triple A's provide.

I ask that you please allocate additional funds for the Area Agencies on Aging. This investment will allow this treasured organization to continue to benefit citizens across our state.

Thank you for all you do and your continued service to the people and state of Maine.