



Testimony of Gerard Queally, President and CEO of Spectrum Generations, the Central Maine Area Agency on Aging

To Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, 132nd Maine Legislature, Second Regular Session

Against LD 2212: An Act Making Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027

Submitted February 18, 2026

Honorable Senate Chair Margaret Rotundo, Honorable House Chair Drew Gattine, and Honorable Ranking Member Jack Ducharme and all other Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs.

My name is Gerard Queally. I am the President and CEO of Spectrum Generations, the Central Maine Area Agency on Aging, a position I have held for the past 15 years.

I am here today **in opposition to LD 2212 as currently constructed**, specifically the Governor's FY26–27 Supplemental Budget Proposal that eliminates the one-time \$3 million allocation to Maine's Area Agencies on Aging.

I want to briefly remind the Committee how we arrived at this moment.

In December of 2024, LD 814—*An Act to Provide Funding to Area Agencies on Aging for Community-based Services and Programs to Support Older Adults*, commonly referred to as the Older Mainers Act—was drafted and ultimately approved by both chambers of this 132nd Legislature. That legislation requested **\$9.75 million** to meet existing community demand for core services such as Meals on Wheels, as well as newer, cost-effective interventions including expedited home repairs, expanded in-home supports, and case-management navigation.

That \$9.75 million figure was not aspirational. It was based on documented, current need. Had it been funded, it would have eliminated waitlists statewide.

This Committee was unable to fund the full request, but it did allocate **a one-time \$3 million appropriation**, which I publicly described as an effort to “hold the line.” For that, I said thank you—and I repeat that thanks today.

But let me be clear: the \$3 million did not solve the problem. It merely slowed the rate of decline.

Even with that funding, **all five Area Agencies on Aging were forced to cut core services and lay off staff**. Today, Maine has statewide **Meals on Wheels waitlist of more than 900 people**. The line is not holding. It is bending.

In fiscal terms, without the \$3 million, the Agencies on Aging would have experienced a **\$1.8 million reduction in FY26**. The one-time allocation resulted in a net increase of only **\$1.2 million above FY25 levels**—still **dramatically below** the identified \$9.75 million needed to meet current demand.

At Spectrum Generations alone, we are adding **approximately 15 people every week** to our Meals on Wheels waitlist.

Now we are arriving at LD 2212, the point at which the Legislature must decide whether to stabilize or further erode this system.

The Governor’s FY26–27 Supplemental Budget Proposal not only fails to fund the original \$9.75 million request—it **eliminates the \$3 million entirely**.

If enacted as proposed, the consequences are immediate and not hypothetical:

- Additional staff layoffs
- Reductions across *all* core services
- Elimination of newly implemented efficiencies and innovations
- And a **tripling of waitlists statewide**

Under this proposal, the Meals on Wheels waitlist will **be near 3,000 older Mainers**.

What makes this moment different from many other difficult budget decisions is that investments in Area Agency on Aging services are not just compassionate, they are fiscally responsible. The services we provide delay or prevent far more costly outcomes, including emergency room utilization, hospitalizations, and premature nursing facility placement. In short, AAA services save the State of Maine money, and the return on investment is well established: modest investments in community-based supports avoid significantly higher Medicaid and health care costs downstream.

I understand that difficult choices must be made among many competing priorities and limited state resources, and I appreciate the work this Committee and the Legislature do to balance those demands.

I was here on February 3rd to celebrate the first-ever Older Mainers Day alongside this Legislature. On that day, the Legislature took an important step and sent a clear message to older Mainers across this state: we see you, we value your contributions, and we recognize the challenges you face.

Today, the Legislature can take the next step—to pair that meaningful recognition with a wise and practical investment. By restoring this funding, you can send a clear and tangible message to older Mainers that the State of Maine is not only grateful for their contributions but also committed to supporting their ability to age safely, independently, and with dignity.

I will close with this.

In my former life, I served 30 years in the United States Navy and retired as a Captain. One of my most fundamental responsibilities was to report, accurately and without spin, my unit's readiness to carry out its mission. To do otherwise would have been a failure of command responsibility.

So, in that same spirit, I report to you today:

My agency's ability to meet mission is severely degraded.

If the \$3 million is not permanently reinstated, **I will not be able to hold the line.**

This is not a future problem. It is a present-day operational reality.

Thank you for your time and consideration.