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Testimony Neither for Nor 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

Greetings Senators Rotundo and Ingwersen Representatives Gattine and Meyer and members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services. My name is Bridget Quinn, and 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 people 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today neither for nor against LD 2212.

First, I want to recognize the tremendous tasks that lie ahead for your committees today. To allocate funding at a time many Mainers are facing stress and burdens from the high cost of everyday things like groceries, heating their homes, and prescription drugs is not an easy task. We greatly appreciate the work that you will all do in the coming weeks.

At AARP Maine our priority remains ensuring that Mainers are able to choose how they live as they age. A critical piece of that, as we hear over and over again from our members, is to be able to age in place. Most Americans age 50-plus would like to live in their current home (75 percent) and community (73 percent) for as long as possible, according to AARP's 2024 Home and Community Based Service Survey¹. The desire to stay put is even stronger among adults age 65-plus and those living in small towns or rural areas. With this in mind, we have some items we wish to highlight to this committee as you prepare your considerations for budget conversations.

We are greatly concerned about the lack of funding to support Maine's Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) in the proposed budget. AAAs provide critical infrastructure to the state in supporting family caregivers and helping Mainers stay at home in their community where they want to be. Maine has an opportunity to invest in our aging infrastructure to help older Mainers age safely at home. The preventative programs of the AAAs are a wise

¹ Binette, Joanne, and Fanni Farago. *2024 Home & Community Preferences Among Adults 18 and Older*. Washington, DC: AARP Research, December 2024. <https://doi.org/10.26419/res.00831.001>

investment for the state. If Agency on Aging services can keep only 103 older Mainers out of Medicaid-funded nursing homes annually, the \$9.75 million increase will have paid for itself.

We also wish to highlight another opportunity for investment in the state budget, Maine's Long Term Care Ombudsman Program. This program provides statewide advocacy for older and disabled adults who need or are receiving care in nursing homes, residential care, assisted living, adult day services and for recipients of home care services. They are important advocates for Mainers residing and using services in these facilities. However, without a \$111,000 investment in their services from the state they could be forced to lay off staff who help support our most vulnerable Mainers.

Finally, we wish to share some critical information from AARP regarding the impacts of H.R. 1 (the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," or OBBBA):

- By 2030, OBBBA-related Medicaid enrollment losses will equal 9.5% of the 2025 Medicaid enrollment level.
- The number of uninsured Mainers is expected to grow by 60% (over 50,000 people) between 2025 and 2030, driven by the OBBBA's Medicaid reductions, the expiration of the Marketplace enhanced premium tax credits, and other new Marketplace eligibility and enrollment restrictions.
- By 2030, SNAP enrollment will decline by over 6% compared with 2025 enrollment levels, and state SNAP budget costs will increase by \$48 million.

Again, we greatly appreciate the work of your committees in considering this budget. We wish to reiterate that it is time for smart investments that recognize the needs and wants of Mainers, to age in their communities. Your committees have an opportunity to build a budget that recognizes this desire by supporting programs that address critical needs like Meals on Wheels, Medicare counseling, and caregiver support through targeted investments in the AAAs and Maine's Long Term Care Ombudsman Program. Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have questions please contact me at bquinn@aarp.org or 207-272-8563.

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