

**To:** Members of the Appropriation and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services Committees

**Re:** Additional Investment in Older Mainers Needed in Supplemental Budget

Dear Members of the Committee,

My name is Karen Foxwell and I live in Northport, ME. Thank you for the work you all do to represent Mainers from across the state.

I am the Board Chair of Spectrum Generations, also known as the Central **Maine** Area Agency on Aging, serving the residents of Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Somerset, and Waldo Counties and the towns of **Brunswick and Harpswell**. **I am writing to testify in strong support of the continued funding of LD 814 which I will refer to as the Older Mainers Act.**

Last year I was elated to hear that The Older Mainers Act was passed and funded at \$3 million, to be divided by the **five** AAA's of Maine. We were hoping **and advocating fervently** for \$9.75 million.

Speaking on behalf of just Spectrum Generations, I offer the following statistics that were expressed by our President and CEO, Gerard Queally. "Currently we serve 900 people through traditional Meals on Wheels a.k.a., MOW, (OAA, NSIP, fundraising, **state** funding) and another 200 through other funding (SSBG and FFS (Section 19)). Our MOW waitlist is **266** people right now. Without the \$3M we can't rely on attrition and will have to seriously consider kicking people off services that currently **receive meals**. We have never done that before. That waitlist will grow easily to over 500 by summer."

This realization is unacceptable to me as both a Mainer and human being! As a citizen of this beautiful state, which has the oldest population, the thought of "kicking people off" of services that they rely on is inhumane and not what Maine is known for!

As a Board Member and volunteer, I have seen, firsthand, the positive impact that services, like Meals on Wheels, have on our community. When I used to deliver meals, I got to know the people on my route. All were grateful for the food, but many also just wanted to talk to another human being. **In fact, for one in five persons served by Meals on Wheels, their delivery driver is the only person they see and communicate with on a regular basis.** I knew that more times than not, I would be the only person they encountered that day **and I was able to provide an essential wellness check.**

Continued funding the Older Mainers Act **beyond last year's one-time allocation,** ensures that older Mainer's have access to essential benefits, community, and services,

AS WELL AS allowing them to stay in their home if they choose. They have been there for us, now it's time for us to be there for them!

I urge you to **FUND** the Older Mainers Act and help us continue providing these vital services to our older residents. Doing so will improve the lives of older adults in Maine for generations to come.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to bettering the lives of Mainers.

Sincerely,

Karen Foxwell

Karen Foxwell  
Northport  
LD 2212

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