

To: The Appropriations Committee

Date: 17 February 2026

### Testimony in Favor of Supporting Funding to Area Agencies on Aging for Community-based Services and Programs to Support Older Adults

My name is Ruby Parker. I am a volunteer for AARP Maine and for Southern Maine Area Agency on Aging (SMAAA). I live in Cumberland Center and I am in favor of providing funding to the area agencies for program support of older adults.

I am a Phone Pal Program volunteer at SMAAA. Each week I call a woman who lives rurally in a rented trailer, is isolated, has limited funds, does not drive, has multiple health issues and does not have friends or family nearby. When I began calling her, she was eating peanut butter and occasionally cans of soup as she could get them. She was concerned about cold weather coming because she didn't believe she would be able to pay for oil or kerosene through the winter.

I told SMAAA about her situation, condition and lack of support. The agency quickly put programs in place and connected her to other agencies to meet her needs.

- She now receives meals each week through the Meals on Wheels program.
- She is receiving a fuel subsidy.
- SMAAA provided blankets and a coat for her. She had none.

I have no doubt in my mind that she would not have survived the winter without services from

SMAAA. She is a proud Maine woman and would not have reached out for help without my insistence. SMAAA has saved her life.

Please fund LD 814 so that the Area Agencies on Aging can continue to provide support programs to older adults that make such an impact to quality of life.