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Testimony of
**Maine Association of Agencies on Aging and Aroostook Agency on Aging
in Support of LD 1648 An Act to Invest in the Health and Wellness of Older Maine Residents by
Expanding Coordinated Community Programming.**

Good morning, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and members of the Health and Human Services Committee.

My name is Joy Barresi Saucier, of Mars Hill, Maine, offering testimony in support of LD 1648 in my role as Executive Director of the Aroostook Agency on Aging and President of the Maine Association of Agencies on Aging.

When people age in their home community, they fair better and so do their communities. The five Agencies on Aging in Maine are all focused on helping individuals age at home. Nationally, research shows that 3 of 4 people want to age in their home and in their home community. In my part of Maine - Aroostook County, nearly 100% of older people agree with this statement.

With many older people in our state currently challenged with housing, food insecurity, transportation, and social isolation, it is imperative that supports are in place to help them navigate how to stay living at home. In FY2022, Maine's Agencies on Aging provided services to over 164,000 Mainers, which included responding to 6,200 individuals needing case management services. Case management services go far beyond responding to simple requests for information and assistance.

The term "case management service" as defined by the Older Americans Act in brief means "a service provided to an older individual...to assess the needs, and to arrange, coordinate, and monitor an optimum package of services to meet the needs of the older individual; and includes services and coordination such as— (i) comprehensive assessment ...; (ii) development and implementation of a service plan with the older individual to mobilize the formal and informal resources and services identified in the assessment to meet the needs of the older individual, including coordination of the resources and services...; (iii) coordination and monitoring of formal and informal service delivery, including coordination and monitoring to ensure that services specified in the plan are being provided; (iv) periodic reassessment and revision of the status of the older individual ..."

Not only did the need for case management rise during the pandemic, it continues to become increasingly complex due to limited community assets and growing challenges in areas such as lack of available, safe housing; high fuel costs; and caring for those with dementia, especially in rural Maine communities. Current funding to support the provision of case management from the Older Americans Act is limited.

LD1684 supports enhancements to case management services provided by the Agencies on Aging in two ways. First, it enables Agencies to invest in critical infrastructure such as technology, staffing, training, and regional outreach strategies to strengthen case management. And second, it provides ongoing funding for the Agencies to sustain the ability to provide higher levels of case management going forward.

**(Continued) Testimony of Maine Association of Agencies on Aging and Aroostook Agency on Aging
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Currently, nearly 30% of the total population of Maine is now aged 60 and older (408,084 individuals per the 2020 Census), this number is anticipated to rise to 38% by 2038, as projected by the State Economist. It is crucial that we invest to ensure that every older adult has access to food, housing, transportation, and medical care now and in the future.

We appreciate your support as we all work together to continue to meet the needs of older adults living independently in the great State of Maine.

Joy Barresi Saucier

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