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Testimony concerning the supplemental budget for health care related items; language to roll back the expansion of the Medicare Savings Program

Good afternoon Chairs Rotundo and Sachs and honorable members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs.

My name is Paul Armstrong. I live in Palermo and I am the Lead Advocacy Volunteer for AARP Maine. As you know, AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. On behalf of our more than 200,000 Maine members, thank you for giving me the opportunity to share testimony with you today. Today, I am testifying against rolling back the expansion of Medicare Savings Program.

Approximately 345,000 Mainers are enrolled in Medicare for their health coverage. As a share of household expenses, Medicare households spend more than double that of non-Medicare households on their health care needs. I personally am a beneficiary of the Qualified Medicare Beneficiary Program (QMB or Quimby) as are many other seniors and disabled citizens. The savings from these programs, while not huge, make a huge difference in mine and others monthly budgets.

It is widely known the participant numbers for the programs- Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (QMB) Program; Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary (SLMB) Program; Qualifying Individual (QI) Program, and Qualified Disabled and Working Individuals (QDWI) Program remain stubbornly low but I'm certain with some outreach and advertising the numbers would increase. I have personally directed several friends to these programs and they greatly appreciate the savings the programs offer. An AARP study found that Medicare Savings Program Enrollment Increases When States Expand Financial Eligibility Criteria.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. On behalf of AARP Maine, other eligible seniors and disabled, I respectfully ask you to stop the roll back of Medicare Savings Programs in Maine.

Thank you,
Paul Armstrong
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