



53 Baxter Boulevard, Suite 202 | Portland, ME 04101
Phone: 866-554-5380 | Fax: 207-775-5727 | TTY: 877-434-7598
aarp.org/me | me@aarp.org | twitter: @aarpmaine
facebook.com/aarpmaine | instagram.com/aarpme

February 26, 2024

Testimony Opposed to LD 2214: An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025

Greetings Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services. I am Bridget Quinn, Associate State Director of Advocacy and Outreach for AARP Maine. Today, I am testifying Against LD 2214.

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. On behalf of our nearly 200,000 members statewide, thank you for the opportunity to share testimony. We are not able to support the budget as proposed in LD 2214, I am here to raise our concerns specifically on the cuts to the Medicare Savings Program and to raise the ask to fund the provisions outlined in LD 1684 which develop interventions and deliver navigation and case management services for older adults.

On the Medicare Savings Program, or MSPs, last year, AARP Maine was eager to support LD 1522 which sought to expand access to Medicare Savings Programs (MSP). We were thrilled when the legislature supported the policy and increased access to MSPs for Mainers who are struggling to afford their health care costs. We are dismayed to see the budget proposal that seeks to roll back this progress.

In Maine, 345,000 individuals depend on Medicare for access to health care services they need. Yet, many still struggle to pay medical bills and make the painful decisions to forgo care entirely. As a share of household expenses, Medicare households spend more than double that of non-Medicare households on their health care needs. Medicare Savings Programs (MSP) are a benefit program that help people with limited income and resources pay for some or all of their Medicare costs. For those that qualify MSPs can be a lifeline putting nearly \$2000 back into the wallets of older adults and adults with disabilities each year.

Increasing the eligibility for MSPs was the right move for Maine. Since passage it has not gotten any easier for older adults on a limited income to afford their everyday needs. This

is also an issue of equity in Maine. MSPs help people of color, women, and individuals under age 65 with disabilities who have disproportionately experienced economic disadvantage. Finally, an AARP study has shown that Maine can increase enrollment in MSPs by increasing the income eligibility standards and thereby help older low-income state residents afford the care they need to stay healthy. To cut this good work would be a mistake for Maine.

I also want to highlight LD 1684, An Act to Invest in the Health and Wellness of Older Maine Residents by Expanding Coordinated Community Programming, which was passed and placed on the special appropriations table in 2023. LD allocates funding to Maine's Area Agencies on Aging (AAA). This bill provides ongoing funding to develop interventions and deliver navigation and case management services for older adults in each of Maine's coordinated community program areas. AARP research has found that older adults wish to remain in their homes and communities as they age. Many will need support that is often provided by Maine's AAAs. We must be able to adequately support our critical AAAs and their teams in all that they do to support Mainers who wish to age in their communities.

Thank you for your time, and for the opportunity to provide testimony. We urge this committee to vote Ought Not to Pass on the current budget proposal and make the needed changes to create a budget that will serve all Mainers, including our most vulnerable older adults. If you have questions for me I can be reached at bquinn@aarp.org or at 207-272-8563.

Bridget Quinn
AARP Maine