

Odd Fellows' and Rebekahs' Home of Maine
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Testimony before the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and the Committee on Health and Human Services on

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

Public Hearing: Monday, February 26, 2024 at 10:00 AM

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, Senator Baldacci, and Representative Meyer, as well as Distinguished Members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and the Committee on Health and Human Services:

- I am John Bolduc. I am the Executive Director of Odd Fellows' and Rebekahs' Home of Maine, a multi-level nursing and Assisted Living home in Auburn.
- I am submitting this testimony in opposition to LD 2214 as it does not provide enough funding for nursing homes and residential care facilities to continue providing care in Maine.
- I have been in my position for 29 years and have spent much of that time struggling with how to accomplish more work with ever dwindling resources.
- Prior to 2019 our industry, was already on a precipice with reimbursement falling further from our actual costs and positions at all levels becoming harder to fill.
- With the epidemic came a huge staffing challenge, which we answered by offering huge pay increases, and retention and recruitment bonuses. In the meantime, staffing agencies took this as an opportunity to recruit more people to their ranks from the nursing homes and assisted living homes and hiked their rates without considering the damage they were doing to the companies they were originally formed to help. Rather than provide help for facilities with emergency needs to fill shifts, they began luring away staff from facilities and renting those same staff back to the homes at a price they could not afford but had to accept with no other choice.
- The state responded by giving us one-time payments to help cover those costs, but those one-time payments are now gone and costs have continued to rise. In wages, supplies, in every facet we were underpaid even with the relief funds, and with those funds gone, disaster looms for many facilities and we have seen many close and will see more.
- That is not acceptable. If we are to do our duty as a society, as a state, and provide the care our elderly population deserves, we need to at least assure that the industry can continue. The 2022

shortfall is \$96.5 million for nursing homes and \$24 million for residential care facilities. This Supplemental Budget only includes \$10 million to address this significant issue. It will take well over 100 million dollars to bring this budget to a level that would support the mere continuance of long-term-care in Maine,

- Without appropriate funding, more homes will close, more elderly will have to move hundreds of miles away, more lives of our elderly will be unnecessarily shortened because of the stresses of a forced move, and more vital jobs will be lost .
- Please support reasonable funding for the care of our elders. I thank you for your time and I am happy to answer any questions.

John Bolduc
Executive Director
Odd Fellows' and Rebekahs' Home of Maine