



Brad Farrin
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131st MAINE SENATE

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**Testimony of Senator Brad Farrin
In Support of L.D. 2217, An Act to Strengthen the Maine Veterans' Homes with Increased
and Ongoing Funding
Before the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee
March 8, 2023**

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs: My name is Brad Farrin and I represent the people of Senate District 3, which includes towns in Kennebec, Somerset and Penobscot counties. I'm here in strong support of LD 2217, An Act to Strengthen the Maine Veterans' Homes with Increased and Ongoing Funding.

I first want to thank the Senate President for sponsoring this legislation. Like me, Sen. Jackson recognizes the critical role these homes provide to our veterans across the state. So thank you.

This isn't a new request from MVH and this committee doesn't need a history lesson about their past attempts at securing funding. From one-time funding in 2022 to last year's 11th-hour cannabis funding, the Legislature has appropriated money to support MVH—but just barely and just for one year. While I know these funds are appreciated by Sharon Fusco and her team, we must do better. We must provide real, on-going support to the Homes so they don't have to worry, year in and year out like they do today, whether there will be enough money to continue providing their award-winning care.

This bill provides this long-sought sustainable funding structure. Not only does it appropriate \$3.135M in state money to leverage enough federal dollars to close the Homes' \$11.7 million reimbursement gap but it includes an inflationary mechanism so the Homes' have what they need in the future.

This is the bill MVH needs. You'll hear testimony from Sharon about how the Homes are currently spending their reserves on operations today. You'll hear about how long this can continue until those funds run out. These help bring the need into sharper focus but shouldn't, in and of themselves, be the reason to support this bill. Simply put, we have a moral obligation to our veterans to provide them with the care they deserve. MVH needs these funds to continue that care. It's up to us to pass LD 2217 and make sure it is fully funded when it reaches the Appropriations Table.

Thank you.