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2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1400
TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

Kristen Cloutier

33 Charles St.
Lewiston, ME 04240
Phone: (207) 807-1637
Kristen.Cloutier@legislature.maine.gov

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Testimony of Rep. Kristen Cloutier presenting

LD 709, An Act to Establish the Respite for ME Program

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Kristen Cloutier, and I represent House District 94, which includes part of my hometown of Lewiston. I am pleased to sponsor **LD 709, An Act to Establish the Respite for ME Program**.

LD 709 repeals the law that directs the Department of Health and Human Services to administer the Respite Care Fund and instead establishes the Respite for ME Program. It directs the department to administer the Respite for ME Program for the purpose of providing respite care and supplemental services for family caregivers and older relative caregivers. With this bill, the department hopes to codify this critically important program into state law so that all available federal, state and local resources can be utilized.

While I urge the committee to support LD 709 on its own, I will also mention that immediately following the public hearing on this bill, I will be presenting LD 815, a parallel funding bill for the program.

I will now defer to the department who can present this bill in more detail and answer any questions you may have.