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**Testimony of Pamela Corcoran, a resident of Belfast, Maine**

**in support of LD 709 and LD 815**

**An Act to Establish the Respite for ME Program (LD 709) and An Act to Provide Funding for Respite Care and Supplemental Services Provided by the Family Caregiver Support Program (LD 815) before the Joint Committee on Health and Human Services, March 14, 2025**

Chairman Senator Ingersen, Chairwoman Representative Meyer and members of the Committee:

Good morning, my name is Pamela Corcoran, and I am a resident of Belfast, Maine. I am here to testify in support of LD 709 and LD 815 as a care recipient, family caregiver and policy advocate.

It was in my role of an unpaid family caregiver for loved ones with complex medical care needs for 23 years (six of those simultaneously) that I experienced the emotional and financial burdens of caregiving and its toll on care partners. It was a trial by fire and one of the best things I have ever done. It also prepared me to be an older person in need of caregiving support myself.

For the last three years I have been on a complex healthcare journey with a hereditary disease. Without the support of my caregiver, I would not have been able to travel over one hundred miles each way for medical treatments in Scarborough nor have support for activities of daily living including personal care, housekeeping, cooking, and critical companionship during my immune compromised status isolation. My caregiver was a recipient of Respite for Me funds in both years of the pilot program. He was able to utilize funds to provide support for my care, eligible equipment, and personal resiliency services to maintain 24/7 support for me. This pilot program was critical to manage our expenses given our limited income and my inability to maintain my full-time employment.

Finally, as an AARP Me TASH volunteer since 2018 I have learned the importance of speaking directly to elected officials and regulators about initiatives or proposed changes to our state practices and laws. Three points to conclude my testimony:

1. I was happy to read the final report of the Respite for Me pilot program and see its positive results for both recipients as well as the state and AAA administrators.
2. Developing eligibility alignment with the National Family Caregivers Program in a permanent program for Maine will serve a wide range of caregivers supported by a mix of state and federal funding sources.
3. Maintaining the support for low-income family caregiving needs will save taxpayers significant expense over institutional care options.

I am happy to expand on any points made in this testimony or answer any questions by members of the committee. Thank you.