

Testimony of Marc Boissonneault, Saco Maine

In Favor of LD 814: An Act to Provide Funding to Area Agencies on Aging for Community-based Services and Programs to Support Older Adults.

Submitted March 28, 2025

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee.

My name is Marc Boissonneault, and I am testifying in favor of LD 814. I live in Saco currently. As a volunteer at the Southern Maine Agency on Aging, I am proud to be one of nearly 400 volunteers who try to fulfill the goals of this bill every day. Last year, I was asked to ride along with one of our many Meals on Wheels drivers from our Biddeford location (one out of 8 locations). The packers filled each bag with milk, a loaf of bread, apple sauce as well as the meals for the week. A total of 700 meals were delivered that week from this one location. Many of the drivers also participate in our Phone Pals program. They follow-up days after the delivery to check on their clients to make sure all is well and that their needs are met.

I know many of our clients are struggling with monthly finances. There are times when difficult choices need to be made, particularly during the winter months. My 95-year-old mother-in-law will typically call the oil delivery company and ask for only 100 gallons of oil, fearing she will not be able to meet her monthly expenses for food, heat and medication. I suspect many of our older Mainers make that difficult choice every month.

I was a caregiver for several years for my mother when she suffered from memory loss and cancer. Becoming a caregiver was not a choice but a necessity. As the disease progresses, the challenges grow. My mom's wish was to remain in her home.

As a caregiver, it was imperative to me that her basic needs were met. Those included her medical and daily needs at home. Quickly, our caregiver team grew and included an adult day program, as well as home health service.

There were many days when a feeling of helplessness occurred along with these caregiving responsibilities but with the services and team in place, we managed to meet my mom's goal to live her final days at home.

Your support will allow me and the nearly 400 volunteers at the Southern Maine Agency on Aging to continue to do the work which is so needed for our neighbors, friends and family. Many of them have served our communities and our country.

Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Addendum-

My mom attended the Adult Day Program at Southern Maine Agency on Aging for 3 years. She found a purpose in life even when she battled memory loss and cancer. In her final days, she insisted on attending the program knowing she would be surrounded by her friends and trustworthy staff. My mom attended until several days before she passed.