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AARP Maine Testimony in Support of LD 814 An Act to Provide Funding to Area Agencies on Aging for Community-based Services and Programs to Support Older Adults

Greetings Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Alf Anderson, Associate State Director of Advocacy and Outreach for AARP Maine.

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. On behalf of our nearly 200,000 members statewide, thank you for the opportunity to share testimony today. Today I am testifying in support of LD 814.

Older Mainers want to remain in their communities as they age. A survey from AARP conducted in 2024 showed that 82% of Mainers 45-plus would prefer to age in place with caregiver assistance, and 87% say that it is extremely or very important to be able to stay in their own home as they get older.

Though most of us want to age in our homes, there are times when we may need support or assistance to do that. When members of our community call AARP looking for support to age in place, we often direct them to their local Area Agency on Aging. We know that the "triple As" as they are often called, are a reliable resource that will give personalized assistance. Staff at these agencies help Mainers navigate complex applications for support, access Medicare educational tools, and potentially enroll in critical programs such as nutrition services, adult day care and wellness programs. They are a trusted resource greatly valued by those who utilize their services.

Area Agencies on Aging are also a critical support to Maine's nearly 166,000 family caregivers. Caregivers can access support they need at Maine's Area Agencies on Aging. This support could enable a family caregiver to continue to work while providing care. For example, a caregiver might enroll a loved one in the Area Agency on Aging adult day care program or they might seek care for themselves through respite support.

It is important to note that family caregivers in Maine provide 155 million hours of unpaid care which has an estimated economic value of \$2.9 billion¹ Annually. Caregivers need options in the community to access support while providing this care.

The investment in our Area Agencies on Aging as outlined in LD 814 will make our communities more age-friendly and livable. This will allow Maine to work towards building a long-term care system that recognizes the needs and wants of older adults who wish to age in place. This support those who are waiting for support, including some of our most vulnerable residents.

AARP Maine urges this committee to support LD 814. It is time to invest in our community models of care, support Maine's family caregivers and build a long-term care system that enables choice for those who need support.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. If you have any questions for AARP Maine, they can be directed to Bridget Quinn at bquinn@aarp.org.

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AARP Maine

¹ <https://states.aarp.org/maine/valuing-invaluable-report>

