

**Testimony of Hank Dumont to the Health and Human Services
Committee**

**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 on March 28th, 2025

Good Morning, Senator Ingwerson, Representative Meyer and the members of the Health and Human Services Committee.

My name is Hank Dumont, I live in Harrison, Maine. Thank you for the work you all do to represent Mainers from across the state.

I live by myself in a house on Long Lake in northern Cumberland county. I am 90 years old and have been a widower for 25 years. The Meals on Wheels program is something that I have been a part of for 10 years, and those meals have been a godsend for me. Without them I don't think that I would be able to stay in my home all year round. Sure, I have many family members in various parts of Maine and the summer is great with family members and vacationers visiting me, but during the other seasons of the year, I feel quite isolated at times and often cannot leave my home when there is bad weather. The delivery of those meals truly does sustain me when I need them the most.

For the past four years, I also have been lucky enough to participate in the agency's Phone Pal program. Once a week, I get to have a live conversation with a volunteer, named Jim Clark, for about an hour. Sometimes we speak by phone, but many times we connect by Zoom. It means the world to me to be able to see him while we talk. Even though I have a large family, none of them live close to me on a year-round basis,

so it's really, really nice to have someone that I can connect with regularly.

I heard recently that there are something like 600 people on a waitlist to get Meals on Wheels. If folks like me aren't able to get these meals, I bet a lot of them end up in the hospital and probably even nursing homes because they are not able to eat well enough to stay healthy. If this bill can provide the money needed to provide a couple hundred thousand meals to folks who can't get them, then I imagine that it will not only help keep people in their homes; it will probably reduce hospital and nursing home costs.

I have been so lucky to be able to live in my own home as I have gotten into my 80s and 90's. For me, Meals on Wheels and the Phone Pal program have given me the sense that I can live somewhat independently and not be as reliant on family members and the state that I otherwise might be. I cannot tell you how important it is to be able to live in my own home at this point in my life.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Henry "Hank" Dumont