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April 1, 2025

Testimony
In Support of

LD 182 – An Act to Require the Department of Health and Human Services to Establish MaineCare Reimbursement Rates for the Maine Veterans' Homes on a Per Resident Basis

Good Afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and distinguished members of the Health and Human Service Committee. I am Representative Tiffany Strout from Harrington, representing the towns of Milbridge, Harrington, Columbia, Columbia Falls, Centerville, Addison, Jonesport, Beals, Jonesboro, Roque Bluffs, Whitneyville and Machias and I am here today to provide testimony in support of **LD 182 An Act to Require the Department of Health and Human Services to Establish MaineCare Reimbursement Rates for the Maine Veterans' Homes on a Per Resident Basis.**

When I think about what it means to be a Representative, I think about being an advocate for people in the community, to share their stories, share the heritage and history of my community and working to help to provide opportunities and a safety net for the people.

There is no *greater Representative* than our Veterans. Veterans do all of the things a Representative should do while also taking on the personal responsibility of the protecting our freedoms from both domestic and abroad. Growing up in rural Maine by nature creates a close-knit community where you come in contact with Veterans or have family who were or who are serving.

Machias was the first battle site of the Revolutionary War with the battle of the *Margarita*. I have met people who served in WWII including Florence Smith from Jonesport who was a Seabee, a gentleman from Addison, Oscar Look who was on the Baton Death March, 2nd LT Gordon Kelley who received the Distinguished Service Cross for his actions in Vietnam, and a family member who did 3 tours in Vietnam, his son was deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan, my friend who was deployed to the Persian Gulf, my cousin who was also deployed to Iraq for *Operation Iraqi Freedom* and family and kids who have recently graduated from boot camp.

Veterans are amongst all of our communities and many, after their military career, are still giving back via law enforcement or have businesses owners. It is a special person that can continue to give of themselves for the protection of others. I believe they fall in the category of real heroes that don't wear capes.

This bill looks to help with funding for good, safe long-term care of our Veterans. The same Veterans who put their lives on the line so we can all disagree and be able to share our thoughts, protest and write, dress and

District 11 Addison, Beals, Columbia, Columbia Falls, Harrington, Jonesboro, Jonesport, Machias, Milbridge, Roque Bluffs, Whitneyville, Centerville Township, and North Washington (Part)

eat as we see fit for how we want to live our lives. Unfortunately, everything comes down to funding. It is said there is no money left in this most recent biennial budget. However, I would say there is money in the budget, \$11.3 billion in fact, and this money could be allocated to making sure those who have kept America safe get the opportunity to live out their lives with us looking out for them. After all, when they enlisted, they wrote a blank check on their future knowing one of the terms for cashing could be their lives.

I think this bill emphasizes the saying, "We may not know them all, but we owe them all."

Thank you for your time today and I would be glad to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tiffany Strout". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tiffany Strout
State Representative