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April 1, 2025

AARP Maine Testimony in Support of LD 979 Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 113: Assisted Housing Programs Licensing Rule, a Late-filed Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Health and Human Services

Greetings Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and members of the Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Bridget Quinn, 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 979.

As you have heard me speak about in this committee before, older Mainers want to age in their communities and outside of facility-based care. 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.

We know that this is not always possible and, for some Mainers, they will require more support. Those who require more support may look to a community model of care such as assisted living as a preferred option. Nationally, assisted living is expanding rapidly in large part because older adults wish to remain outside of what are considered traditional "institutional settings."

This has meant that in recent years the needs of those residing in Assisted Living facilities in Maine have changed drastically. Given the changing needs of the population utilizing assisted living facilities in Maine, the Department proposed the rules before you today. Since there are no national standards for assisted living, each state must establish its own standards and definition of assisted living that match the needs for their local population.

The rules on assisted living in Maine are currently outdated and do not reflect the needs of the populations who utilize assisted living. This includes some of our most vulnerable residents. A 2024 Cutler Institute study found that in Private Non-Medical Institutions the

percentage of residents requiring assistance in five measured activities of daily living consistently increased from 2021 to 2023.

The proposed rules reflect a reasonable compromise. This was developed through a process of extensive public comment and changes made based on that feedback. It is time to have rules that reflect the needs of those residing in Maine's assisted living facilities. This is their home and a place they deserve to feel safe.

We offer all the above for the committee to consider as you deliberate. AARP's priority remains to support legislation, advance programs and create strong supports for those who wish to age in place. We look forward to continuing work with this committee on policies that prioritize aging in place and supporting care partners in Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to testify if you have any questions, please contact me at bquinn@aarp.org or at 207-272-8563.

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