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Testimony of Rep. Bill Bridgeo introducing

**LD 1125, An Act Regarding the Impact of Certain Nonemergency
Transportation Services Contracts on Community Action Agency Programs
Before the Health and Human Services Committee**

Good afternoon, Sen. Ingwersen, Rep. Meyer and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Bill Bridgeo, and I represent District 60 – the East Side of Augusta. I am here today to introduce **LD 1125, An Act Regarding the Impact of Certain Nonemergency Transportation Services Contracts on Community Action Agency Programs**.

I present this bill because I am concerned that our Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) may inadvertently be missing an opportunity to support our vitally important regional community action agencies, including the Kennebec Valley CAP, which provides an array of important services for low- and moderate-income residents in my community.

I have been a strong proponent of CAP agencies and their mission as far back as my year in the AmeriCorps VISTA program out of college – assigned to the Worcester area CAP and a few years later as a grant writer for the northeastern Connecticut regional CAP. Wherever my city management career took me, the local CAP's were an integral part of the local social safety net, including here in Augusta.

I know that CAP's are always struggling to cobble together a mix of government and grant funded programming to maintain their existence, and typically, program funding includes support of agency overhead.

What prompts LD 1125 is a decision by DHHS to award a large contract for non-emergency medical transportation services throughout the state to a single entity – based out of state – at the expense of an important program revenue source to our state CAP agencies.

The bill, if adopted, would require DHHS, as part of its contract award scoring process, to somehow take into consideration the impact of its award on the CAP agencies. State agencies are very adept at crafting contract scoring mechanisms that give weight to a wide array of considerations. I can think of a number of advantages that a locally based transportation provider

might have (existing client relationships; community familiarity; shared administrative costs) that might justify some number of points in a scoring system.

I'm not suggesting the game be rigged. This can all be done in an open process.

I'm also aware that there's litigation pending challenging the recent award of the services at issue here, and that a court decision may render LD 1125 moot and that pending litigation may inhibit the ability of advocates to speak to the bill but hopefully they can address questions you may have.

I appreciate your willingness to consider this matter.