

**STATEMENT OF JULIA WOODCOCK ERVIN**

**TO THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH COVERAGE,  
INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES**

**ON L.D. 1413, "AN ACT TO AMEND LAWS GOVERNING HEARING AID DEALERS  
AND HEALTH INSURANCE TO ALLOW AN EXCEPTION TO CERTAIN HEARING  
EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS"**

**APRIL 15, 2025**

Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, members of the committee, my name is Julia Ervin. I am here to testify in support of L.D. 1413, "An Act to Amend Laws Governing Hearing Aid Dealers and Health Insurance to All an Exception to Certain Hearing Aid Requirements."

I greatly appreciate the Committee's consideration of this legislation and am here to speak in favor of it. Before doing so, I would like to thank Senator Bennett for his leadership in advancing this legislation and for the support of the bill's sponsors, Senators Bailey, Baldacci, Cyrway, Daugherty, Haggan, and Moore, and Representatives Zager, Graham, and Henderson.

As you have heard from Senator Bennett, this legislation has been prompted by a deeply personal and difficult experience concerning my mother, Joan Woodcock Nestler.

My mother turned 100 in May of 2023. Although she had become more limited in her abilities in recent years, she continued to reside on her own in a Senior Living apartment in Bangor and her mental powers were undiminished. That December, my mother suffered a decline in health and eventually was diagnosed as having entered a terminal decline.

She was moved into nursing and hospice care and the entire family rallied to her side. Unfortunately, shortly into her stay in the nursing facility, her hearing aid became lost. Right away, we all understood this was a calamitous development.

Years earlier, my mother had become completely deaf in her left ear. She retained some hearing in her right ear but was very dependent on her hearing aid to participate in conversation and enjoy the basic activities of life that persons with normal hearing take for granted.

We immediately began to search for ways to replace the hearing aid but found that we could not. Maine law barred my mother from obtaining a new hearing aid without an evaluation by a licensed professional, as she had missed an appointment and it had been more than a year since her last evaluation. There were no exceptions to this law.

But my mother could not possibly be moved from hospice care for that evaluation. Try as we might, we could find no exception to this requirement.

As a result, my mother's final weeks were spent largely separated from the world around her. In visiting her, we did the best we could. We would sit by her right ear and speak directly into it. Often she would respond and engage us. Other times she would not. Her frustration and ours was beyond measure. On February 19, 2024, my mother died in that nearly soundless world that had enveloped her.

My mother was a very caring person. She spent much of her life trying to make life better for others. I know she would be very grateful to know that her difficult experience might result in a change in the law and could spare others from enduring what she endured. I also know that she would be especially proud that her granddaughter, Eliza, whom all of you know, took it upon herself to set this legislation in motion.

I thank you for your kind and thoughtful attention and ask that the Committee report L.D. 1413 with an "ought to pass" recommendation. I would be happy to answer any questions.