

Testimony of Patrick Woodcock
Resident of Portland, ME
LD 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

Chair Bailey, Chair Mathieson, and Members of the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services my name is Patrick Woodcock and I am a resident of Portland.

Prior to addressing the legislation before you today, I will try to very provide a brief introduction of my grandmother, Joan Nestler, who died last year at the age of 100. I hope all of you have had someone like my Grandma in your life. She provided unconditional love, remembered all her grandchildren’s birthdays, prayed for us, and was our biggest supporter. One hope of mine is to repay someone in the future with a fraction of the love and inspiration that she provided me and her entire family.

If she was here with us today, she would thank you all for your public service. She would provide appreciation to Senator Bennett and the cosponsors for the legislation and if you had the opportunity to converse with you she would surely find some personal connection with you or your district and be interested in your motivation for being a part of the Maine Legislature. She would sincerely wish you and your work well. Grandma maintained her interest in public policy and current events until her passing religiously reading the Bangor Daily News and the New York Times. Grandma found your work interesting and important.

On a broader policy level, and within the scope of this Committee, I believe my grandmother would urge us to maintain respect and support for people as they age. As people live longer, which is something to celebrate, it presents a challenge and an opportunity: a challenge to meet their needs with care, and an opportunity to incorporate their wisdom and lived experiences into our policymaking.

Turning to the bill before you today, I believe Grandma would find it both important and I think she would also recognize that her situation was so devoid of common sense that it almost rose to the level of a comedy. You see for at least the past 20 years, Grandma was clearly hard of hearing. In the final years of her life, it didn’t take a medical professional to recognize that she was unlikely to be climbing Mount Katahdin, racing in the Kenduskeag canoe race, or swimming across Tunk Lake. The notion that she would need to undergo a hearing exam just to replace her hearing aids was so contrary to common sense that when I first heard it was required and would be challenging to support her, I assumed it had to be a mistake.

This legislation is commonsense.

I urge the Committee to support the legislation and provide critical flexibility to our aging Mainers and waiving the requirement to have a hearing examinations if the individual is too ill or infirmed to safely attend the examination.