

Testimony of Jay Darling, Kevin Tesseo in support of **LD 2056**:

Madam Chairs (Senator Donna Bailey, Representative Kristi Mathieson), and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance, and Financial Services.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am here on behalf of Darling's Auto Group. We have dealerships in Bangor, Ellsworth, Newport, Augusta, and Brunswick and employ over 650 people. I am speaking in strong support of **LD 2056**.

Every day, we work with Maine families who need reliable transportation to get to work, bring children to school, and access health care and essential services. For many of these customers, the biggest obstacle to purchasing a safe and dependable vehicle is not the vehicle itself — it is access to affordable financing options.

This bill is important because it would modernize Maine's consumer credit laws to allow flexible vehicle payment schedules.

Right now, under Maine's Consumer Credit Code, creditors are prohibited from offering loans with payment schedules in which one payment is not "substantially equal" to the others.

So, without this change, Maine residents are effectively denied access to programs such as the **Ford Flex Buy program**, which allows customers to structure payments in a way that better matches their financial needs — particularly during the first few years of ownership. The monthly payment for the first 3 years could be 15-24% lower, allowing much more flexibility for the consumer.

This program is not experimental or untested. In fact, **45 other states already allow this type of financing option**. Maine is currently one of only a handful of states where consumers do not have access to this flexibility.

The result is that Maine customers are placed at a disadvantage. Some may be forced to seek financing outside the state, or even purchase their vehicle in another state simply because the options available there are more modern and accommodating.

That is not good for Maine families, and it is not good for Maine businesses.

Passing LD 2056 would help ensure that our residents have access to the same competitive financing tools that consumers across the country already enjoy. It would keep Maine buyers here at home, support local dealerships, and most importantly, expand responsible options for customers who need them.

This legislation is about fairness, competition, and ensuring Maine consumers are not left behind.

I respectfully urge the committee to support LD 2056 and move it forward. Thank you.