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May 12, 2021

Testimony in support of LD 1463 An Act To Make Health Care Coverage More Affordable for Working Families and Small Businesses

Greetings Chairs Sanborn and Tepler, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services.

My name is Bridget Quinn and I am the Associate State Director of Advocacy and Outreach with 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 more than 200,000 members statewide, thank you for the opportunity to share testimony with you today.

Today I am testifying in support of LD 1463.

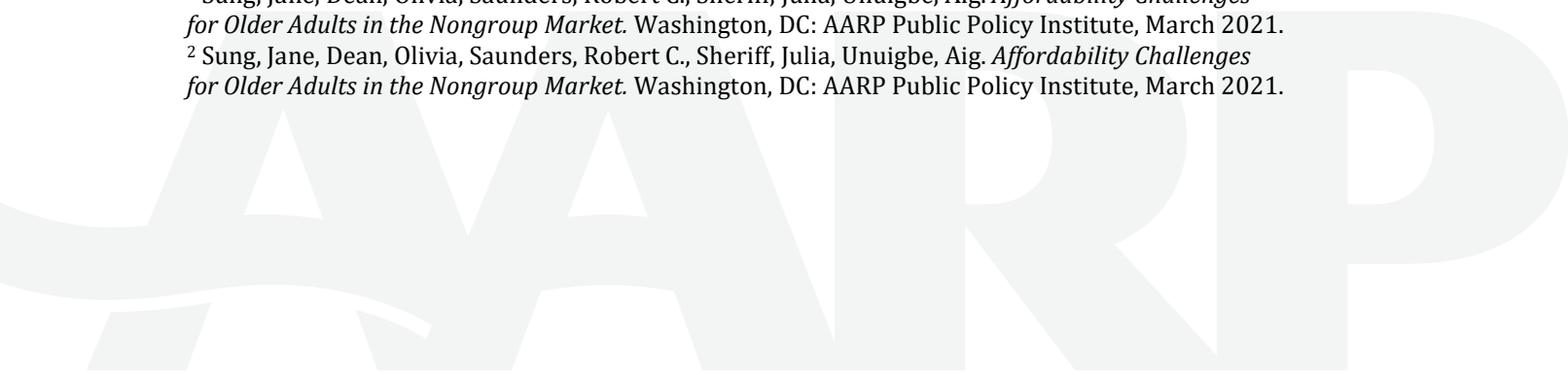
For Mainers who do not have employer-based coverage and are not eligible for programs such as Medicare, individual health insurance plans have been key to providing healthcare coverage. However, high premium and out-of-pocket costs can pose a major burden for those with coverage and may prevent uninsured older adults from affording coverage. This can negatively impact access to care.¹

Since the enactment of the 2010 Affordable Care Act, uninsured rates for older adults have decreased. According to the AARP Public Policy Institute, approximately 5.4 million Americans ages 50-64 have health insurance coverage through the individual insurance market. Despite this improvement, a significant number of older adults still struggle to afford their health insurance and out-of-pocket costs.²

LD 1463 will invest vital funds to make health coverage more affordable to Mainers who need it most. According to the same AARP Public Policy Institute paper, "In 2019, nearly one-fifth of older nongroup enrollees who received subsidies still faced unaffordable costs, and over half of older adults without public or employer coverage who were between 100 and 400 percent of FPL (i.e., eligible for subsidies) remained uninsured. Premium costs

¹ Sung, Jane, Dean, Olivia, Saunders, Robert C., Sheriff, Julia, Unuigbe, Aig. *Affordability Challenges for Older Adults in the Nongroup Market*. Washington, DC: AARP Public Policy Institute, March 2021.

² Sung, Jane, Dean, Olivia, Saunders, Robert C., Sheriff, Julia, Unuigbe, Aig. *Affordability Challenges for Older Adults in the Nongroup Market*. Washington, DC: AARP Public Policy Institute, March 2021.



were likely especially challenging for those with incomes too high to receive full tax credit subsidies.”³

Policy efforts should build upon goals to improve access to adequate and affordable coverage in Maine. LD 1463 provides financial assistance to Mainers who need it to afford coverage and has the potential to encourage individuals to enroll in available health coverage options for themselves and their families.

I respectfully urge you to support LD 1463. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions and can be contacted at bquinn@arp.org or at 207-272-8563.

Thank you,
Bridget Quinn
AARP Maine

³ Sung, Jane, Dean, Olivia, Saunders, Robert C., Sheriff, Julia, Unuigbe, Aig. *Affordability Challenges for Older Adults in the Nongroup Market*. Washington, DC: AARP Public Policy Institute, March 2021.