



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer and members of the Committee, I am Jessica Fay, representing the people of House District 66, parts of the towns of Casco, Poland and Raymond. I am pleased to be testifying **in favor** of LD 17, **Resolve, To Provide Rural Nonmedical Transportation Services to the Elderly and Adults with Disabilities Receiving Home and Community Benefits under the MaineCare Program.**

In 2018 Age-Friendly Raymond did a survey of our community and one of the most important issues that needed addressing was access to non-medical transportation. In my work on behalf of older Mainers, and particularly those who live in more rural areas underserved or unserved by public transportation, one of the most frequent issues I hear about is transportation.

Eleanor has macular degeneration and she lives in an apartment in senior housing. Her daughter lives about an hour away, and her son just passed away. I talk with her occasionally and, pre-pandemic, the thing that she usually mentioned was how lonely she was, how she wishes she could go to the store without “bothering” her family or asking a friend for a ride or operating on someone else’s timeframe. Being dependent on the kindness of others is often a barrier to full participation in activities outside one’s home.

The ability to age well in community depends on whether a person has access to the things that community offers. This pandemic has shown us how important being able to go to the store, the library, or community center is to our well-being. Access to non-medical transportation for those who can’t or don’t drive means that those people can get a ride to the grocery store or other places that help bolster health – we know now how important social interaction is to mental health.

Last week I attended NCSL’s program on evidence-based policymaking. One of the tenets of this approach is testing out new policies in small ways with built in assessment and data collection. I commend Senator Maxmin for presenting this resolve as a way to test out the efficacy of this policy initiative. If this pilot program effectively assists older adults and people with physical and intellectual disabilities with their independence, I am confident that it could help these populations in our communities live even better and more fulfilling lives.

Thank you all for your consideration of this important Resolve.