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Testimony in Support of LD 74, *Resolve, to Ensure Appropriate Personal Needs Allowances for Persons Residing in Long-Term Care Facilities*

Good morning, Chairs Claxton and Meyer and members of the Joint Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Lori Parham and I am the State Director for 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 our more than 200,000 members statewide, thank you for the opportunity to share testimony today. **I am testifying today in support of LD 74.**

As you are aware, Medicaid is the largest public financing program providing health and long-term care coverage for people with low-incomes in the United States. The program helps finance care for more than two-thirds of all nursing home residents. AARP believes long term services and supports should emphasize the independence, dignity, autonomy, and privacy of individual consumers so they can maximize their physical and psychosocial potential, and the personal needs allowance helps to do so. While Medicaid residents in long-term care often have outside income, such as Social Security or a small savings, Medicaid takes most of that money to defray care costs, leaving residents with little to spend on personal items, such as toothpaste, deodorant, snacks they enjoy and gifts for family members. The personal needs allowance allows residents to recoup some of those costs, but the limits for those in nursing homes and other long-term care facilities have not been raised in years. We believe even a small increase is worthwhile to these residents to maintain even a small amount of independence and normalcy.

We hope you will consider this issue in budget conversations. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Lori Parham
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