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## **In Support of LD 727 Resolve, To Ensure the Health and Wellness of Older Residents of the State**

Good afternoon Chairs Claxton and Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services.

My name is Pamela Corcoran and I am an AARP member and volunteer with AARP Maine. AARP is a non-profit, non-partisan organization representing the interests of 50+ Mainers and their families.

I am providing testimony today in support of LD 727. My husband and I live in subsidized senior housing in Belfast and we have witnessed first-hand the challenges of our neighbors having enough to eat and the challenges when returning home from hospital or skilled care stays.

According to a recent report by the Good Shepherd Food Bank, nearly 14% of Maine seniors—about 45,600 people—are food insecure. An additional 17% of Maine seniors—about 56,000 people—experience marginal food security and are at risk of going hungry. The number of food insecure Maine seniors has more than doubled since 2010.<sup>1</sup> This means, quite simply, that a third of our parents and grandparents do not have enough to eat. We believe it is time to reestablish a policy that removes the asset test for seniors to qualify for the federal supplemental nutrition program. The only result we have seen since this policy was repealed is a state where more seniors are food insecure.

Grappling with the qualification process for SNAP benefits is very difficult as both a matter of complexity as well as overcoming the stigma and challenge of asking for help. By creating barriers like asset tests for seniors, we make that process even more burdensome. Asset limits set a maximum threshold for saving that is far below the amount needed to cope with a medical emergency, car breakdown or other urgent and unanticipated expenses. Combine this with income and value of vehicle restrictions and we have a cascade of catastrophes for seniors truly in need.

We also support the implementation of a pilot project to provide meals to Mainers 60 and older who need support. According to the AARP Long-Term Services and Supports Scorecard,<sup>2</sup> Maine ranks 33<sup>rd</sup> in its balance of serving older Mainers in the community. We believe that small interventions such as providing meals can go a long way to stabilize people who are homebound after a hospital or skilled nursing stay in their community, limiting readmissions to the hospital or the need to move to a nursing home.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on these important issues for older Mainers. We ask your support of LD 727.

Thank you, Pamela Corcoran

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gsfb.org/blog/2017/04/30/senior-hunger-in-maine-report/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.longtermscorecard.org/~media/Microsite/State%20Fact%20Sheets/Maine%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>