

**Raymond Gallant & Kathleen Forti-Gallant  
PO Box 7 - 131 Loon Cove Road  
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March 15, 2021

RE: Support for LD 485 - An Act to Continue Funding for Home-delivered Meals for Homebound Seniors and To Address Growing Demand

Dear Senator Claxton & Representative Meyer & members of the Health & Human Services Committee,

My name is Kathleen Forti-Gallant and my husband & I are lifelong Maine residents currently residing in Stetson. I work in Bangor as a Nurse Practitioner. I am writing this testimony from my husband & I to urge you to support LD 485 ‘.

We realize that these are tough economic times, but homebound seniors deserve an opportunity for nutritious meals that they otherwise would not have access to. Proper nutrition through these meals promotes physical & mental health as well as a safety check. When meals are brought to the homebound seniors, someone is at least seeing them when they drop off a meal and decreases their isolation, especially due to COVID-19 (within CDC guidelines).

One great thing about living in Maine is that we help our neighbors and have a sense of community. These people have helped others when they are able and now are one of the most vulnerable populations in our aging state. Food is a basic need and doing the right thing for others is a community need in our opinion.

The people who work to prepare and deliver these meals are continuing the tradition of helping neighbors in need and they can also be proud of this role. My husband’s father was a retired rural postal worker who after his wife’s stroke became more isolated with no sense of purpose. Volunteering for meals on wheels gave him something to do to help others and a routine, so he felt good about that. Coincidentally, some of the seniors were his prior mail route customers, so it brought back memories of a less challenging time.

So how do we pay for this? I would encourage use of excess food from farmers, volunteers including those receiving subsidies, and leveraging for federal funds to supplement, & criteria.

I appreciate the opportunity to share our testimony with the committee and urge you to support LD 485. Please feel free to contact me with any further questions.

Respectfully submitted,

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