



Testimony of Good Shepherd Food Bank in support of LD 485, An Act To Continue Funding for Home-delivered Meals for Homebound Seniors and To Address Growing Demand

March 17, 2021

To Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Amy Gallant and I am the Vice President of Public Policy and Research for the Good Shepherd Food Bank of Maine. We have a network of more than 500 partner agencies, supporting our mission to eliminate hunger in Maine by improving access to nutritious food for people in need, building strong community partnerships, and mobilizing the public in the fight to end hunger. Last year, though our network, we distributed 27 million meals across the entire state.

This bill provides ongoing funding to provide home-delivered meals to homebound seniors and to leverage all federal funds available. The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of delivering meals to people at home, more than we ever before realized. I remember about a year ago, I got a call from a friend in Bath. She is the director of an affordable housing organization, and had started delivering pantry staples to residents' doors. Like her, most of our agency partners who provide food in communities continued to operate during the pandemic, and many of them moved to a home-delivery model whenever possible.

While some people have the time, resources, and ability to take ingredients and make a meal for themselves, we know that others, particularly older Mainers and Mainers living with disabilities, are better served by ready-to-eat meals that only require reheating. We are in ongoing discussions with a number of our partners who are trying to continue the home-delivery model, which is a significant shift from the traditional pantry model or the congregate meal model. It requires resources, time, space, and delivery.

The charitable food network cannot alone end hunger in Maine, no matter the model of food delivery. We must work in tandem with local, state, and federal government. This bill leverages all federal funds available for the state to increase the amount of meals delivered to homebound seniors. Good Shepherd supports this funding allocation, and urges you to do the same.

Thank you for your consideration. I am happy to take any questions you may have.

Thank you,

Amy Gallant
Good Shepherd Food Bank
Vice President of Public Policy & Research