

Testimony in support of LD 485

An Act To Continue Funding for Home-delivered Meals for Homebound Seniors and to Address Growing Demand.

Submitted by Dan Moore, Orrington, Maine
March 16, 2021

Good afternoon Senator Claxton, Representative White and members of the Health and Human Services Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of LD 485, An Act to Continue Funding for Home-Delivered Meals for Homebound Seniors, and to address Growing Demand.

My name is Dan Moore and I am a retired member of our U. S. Military having spent 36 years in service to the U.S. Air Force. Following my retirement from uniformed service in July 2018, it wasn't long before I felt the need to re-engage in some form of service to my community, and in December 2020 I found my opportunity through the Eastern Area Agency on Aging located in Brewer, ME in the Meals on Wheels program. Currently, I volunteer in both the packing and preparation of meals for delivery as well as delivery of the meals to our consumers. My experience to date has been both heartwarming and humbling. The staff at Eastern Area Agency on Aging are committed and passionate about serving our growing elder population and their compassion has been evident in every interaction I have had with them and in every interaction I have witnessed between staff members and consumers. My work there has brought me into the company of fellow volunteers who share my desire to ignore all the negativism and talk of division in our world today and instead commit to bringing about a greater good for our community. I believe our work with Meals on Wheels serves our positive mental and emotional well-being.

I am certain that those providing testimony in support of this bill will provide you with statistics and facts about a growing elder population in our community, a burgeoning demand for additional meals due to COVID restrictions, and on-going food insecurity issues in our State. What you may have a difficult time qualifying or quantifying is the difference this program makes in the mental, emotional, and social welfare of its participants.

I have been told by some I deliver these meals to that I am the only other human face they have seen all week. Some thank me when I inquire as to their recovery from recent surgery, others want to tell me about a phone call or an email they recently received from a family member or friend they are currently apart from. Most seem to appreciate the fact I remember their pet's name. "Every week, that's wonderful"!, was the feedback I received from the newest addition to my delivery route when she realized we would have a weekly connection. I think this positive impact is best summed up in the words of one of my consumers who I hadn't seen or spoken with in over two weeks. I informed one of the agency staff members and she immediately reached out and was able to make contact and confirm that all was well. Realizing what had happened this consumer replied, "Aren't I lucky to have so many people who care about me".

Ladies and gentlemen, your support of this bill will ensure the continuation of a program that provides much-needed sustenance to the hungry while also feeding the mental and emotional well-being of all who participate in it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.