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April 30, 2021

Testimony in Support for LD 1624, Resolve, To Create a Stakeholder Group to Identify the Needs of Long-term Care Family Caregivers.

Good morning Chairs Claxton and Meyer and honorable members of the Joint Committee on Health and Human Services.

My name is Paul Armstrong. I live in Palermo and I am a volunteer for AARP Maine. AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering people 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. On behalf of our more than 200,000 Maine members, thank you for giving me the opportunity to share testimony with you today. Today, I am testifying in support of LD 1624.

I cared for my aging father for six years before he passed away. During that time, his care and financial responsibilities fell solely on him and me, as we had no family nearby to ask for help. During my time as his caregiver I spent endless hours taking him to his doctor's appointments and providing care for him. As you can imagine, this took a toll on the both of us, both mentally and financially.

As his condition worsened and I could no longer provide adequate care for him, I reached out to my local Area Agency on Aging to see if he would qualify for any the programs, but sadly he didn't. We couldn't find any answers on how best to move forward, we had no one to guide us, no one to turn to ask questions to. We were left in the dark. Eventually I had to hire a fulltime live-in caregiver as I could no longer provide the care he needed.

There were many barriers for us to receive support. Not only did we not qualify for support through local agencies, certain services weren't available in most of the more rural areas of the Maine, like Palermo.

I am one of the many that have gone through this in Maine. By creating a stakeholder group to identify the needs of long-term family caregivers, we will be doing our duty to help those who truly need help the most.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. On behalf of AARP Maine, I respectfully ask you to vote in favor of LD 1624.

Thank you,
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