

Meghan Allen  
Old Orchard Beach

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services: my name is Meghan Allen, I am a resident of Old Orchard Beach and I am here today to testify in favor of LD 296.

I am one of the one in ten Mainers who has provided caregiving duties for a loved one. Beginning at age 18 (and throughout my 20s) I acted as a caretaker for my same-age best friend who was diagnosed with a degenerative disease when we were just young kids.

Long-term care prioritizes placing people in facilities away from family instead of receiving care at home from a loved one or caretaker; but the options are not always suitable or economically viable.

I provided care until I reached a breaking point in 2015. I was working full time, attending college and caregiving for my friend- and I was exhausted. Hired caregivers that would relieve me during the day often didn't show up or were underskilled- these issues prevented continuity in her care. I would often have to leave my workplace or class to bring her lunch, help her use the bathroom- or pick up something she dropped on the floor. There were many sleepless nights going to the ER because of health complications. It was physically, emotionally and financially stressful. My performance at work and in school was eroding- and I felt backed into a corner. I had to give up. She passed away barely a year later- and I've carried a lot of guilt over the years since. Choosing between caring for a loved one or paying the bills should not be a decision so many struggle to make.

LD 296: A Maine Family Caregiver Credit acknowledges the highly valuable and emotional work that family caregivers provide and ensures that caregivers are given a small token of appreciation. Passing this bill is a necessary step towards creating a long-term care system that works; especially in an aging state where care facilities are often overwhelmed or unavailable.

Caregiving will likely affect everyone here at some point in their lives, if it hasn't yet already. Lets pass this bill and provide some necessary relief to the caregivers who's hard work has been historically undervalued.

Thank you,  
Meghan Allen  
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