

Gina Morin
Auburn

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

Caregiving is hard work, and somebody has to do it. This grant program rewards the crucial but often unsung labor Mainers do in caring for loved ones at home. My sister went on family medical leave from her job to take care of our mother. As her bone cancer progressed, our mother was completely bedridden and needed twenty-four-hour care. I've seen firsthand the economic hardships that taking care of a loved one causes for a family. I watched my sister struggle with food insecurity and going to food pantries. Because she couldn't afford to pay for it, she lost her health insurance. In the end, my sister ultimately lost her job because she didn't go back to work within a calendar year. Our mother was still alive and in need of care. Employers don't understand that we don't choose when our loved ones expire. After our mother passed and because my sister lost her job, she ultimately lost her home. That's a hard pill to swallow for not wanting to watch a loved one die in a care facility.

Family caregivers often have a harder time making ends meet because of their caregiving duties. My neighbor takes care of his wife who has MS, cancer and heart issues. He can't work because he has to be there to care for her. They struggle financially because all they have is her disability for income. This grant will go a long way to help these folks get some kind of financial help. It will also give them the recognition for all their hard work. It's too late for my sister and it's not too late for all the other family caregivers. Let's show these folks that Maine cares about them, and they are not alone, by passing LD 296. Thank you.