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May 20, 2021

Senator Claxton, Co-Chair
Representative Meyer, Co-Chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0100

Re: LD 296 – An Act to Create the Family Caregiver Grant Pilot Program

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services:

The purpose of this letter is to provide information to the Committee relating to LD 296, *An Act to Create the Family Caregiver Grant Pilot Program*. The Department is neither for nor against this bill. The Department's Office of Aging and Disability Services provided suggestions in the drafting process and appreciates the sponsor's openness to our feedback.

This bill establishes in statute a Family Caregiver Grant Pilot Program for certified family caregivers and permits eligible family caregivers to choose annually to receive services provided under the existing State-funded Respite Care Program or the family caregiver grant as established by this bill. It requires the Department, by routine technical rulemaking, to prescribe the details of eligibility for family caregiver services and the Family Caregiver Grant Pilot Program. In addition, the bill requires the establishment of a stakeholder group to assist in the design of this pilot, including eligibility criteria, certification process, payment methods, evaluation planning, and rigorous outreach strategies. The bill also requires the Department to develop and submit a report to the joint standing committees of the Legislature having jurisdiction over Health and Human Services matters no later than January 1, 2025.

The Department's Office of Aging and Disability Services manages the State-funded Respite Care Program for Adults with Alzheimer's Disease or Related Disorders through contracts with the area agencies on aging across the State. Utilizing the current structure within the area agencies on aging, this bill could expand access to respite service or reimburse family caregivers directly through the Family Caregiver Grant Pilot Program. Should the Committee wish to create this temporary pilot program, we recommend doing so with unallocated language and considering statutory language when the results of the pilot are known and a decision about the future of the program is made. We have concerns about putting the pilot in statute, which we would gladly expand on at a work session if helpful.

Through this letter, we want the Committee to be aware of the above information as it considers this bill moving forward. If you have further questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul Saucier".

Paul Saucier, Director
Office of Aging and Disability Services