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AARP Maine testimony in support of LD 847 An Act to Prohibit Housing Discrimination

Greetings Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Committee on Judiciary. My name is Bridget Quinn, Associate State Director of Advocacy and Outreach for AARP Maine.

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. On behalf of our nearly 200,000 members statewide, thank you for the opportunity to share testimony today. Today I am testifying in support of LD 847.

As you have heard, source-of-income discrimination occurs when proprietors refuse to rent to a housing applicant solely because of that person's lawful source of income. Source-of-income discrimination disproportionately limits housing options for renters from communities of color, women, and people with disabilities. Policies that prevent this form of discrimination makes it easier for older adults and others to find housing that is affordable and appropriate. It is particularly helpful for housing voucher recipients to be able to use them in high-opportunity neighborhoods with proximity to jobs and other amenities of a livable community.¹

LD 847 seeks to protect renters from discrimination based on the source of their income. This includes protecting individuals using Social Security benefits. Maine has 52,833 residents who receive Social Security disability income, representing 14.9 percent of the state's Social Security beneficiaries.² In Maine, the average Social Security disabled worker benefit is \$1,198 per month (about \$14,400 annually). Provisions in LD 847 will be critical as we see the number of older adults renting increase. The number of older renters is projected to increase steadily for the next two decades, from 7.4 million in 2020 to 12.9 million in 2040.

¹ AARP Policy Book. Fair Housing. <https://policybook.aarp.org/policy-book/housing/fair-housing#policy-section>

² OASDI Beneficiaries by State and County, 2020. Social Security Administration: https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/statcomps/oasdi_sc/2020/table02.html.

This type of legislation supports Maine's 355,433 Social Security beneficiaries, about one in four Mainers, who may use that income to support their housing needs. Housing is central to community and individual well-being. The type and location of a home can affect almost every aspect of a person's life. Most older adults want to remain in their communities as they age. To stay in our communities as we age we need to ensure adequate protections are in place to support those on a limited income as LD 847 does.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. If you have any questions for me, I can be reached at bquinn@aarpp.org.

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AARP Maine

