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**April 17, 2025 Testimony in Support of LD 1022: An Act to Protect
and Increase Access to Justice in Civil Legal Matters for Persons with Low Incomes**

Greetings Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. I am Julie Flynn from the town of Gray, testifying in support of LD 1022: An Act to Protect and Increase Access to Justice in Civil Legal Matters for Persons with Low Incomes.

As an AARP Maine volunteer and a Maine resident, I was concerned to learn about the possible reduction in funding available for the Maine Civil Legal Services Fund. I, like many of us testifying today, have been frustrated with the lack of public defenders within the state, and worry that a cut in funding for our Civil Legal Services Fund will only add to the current problems of Maine's justice system.

By supporting LD 1022, we have a chance to maintain and even expand services for low-income individuals around the state who need access to legal representation and experts within the law when their basic human needs are at stake. As stated in the bill, 356,500 Maine residents have incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level. When someone needs legal assistance, accessible help should be within reach for these at-risk Mainers.

If services begin to shrink in July 2025, more civil legal aid providers around the state will continue to be stretched thin over an ever-increasing caseload. I urge you to support increased funding for civil legal aid for low-income Mainers, especially older adults, who are likely to need and utilize these services going forward.

LD 1022 would provide a new, stable climate through which we can better support low-income Mainers who need legal help to assert and defend their rights.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify,

Julie Flynn
Gray, Maine

