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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 Grace McCarthy from the town of Bowdoinham, testifying in support of LD 1022: An Act to Protect and Increase Access to Justice in Civil Legal Matters for Persons with Low Incomes.

I am worried about the consequences of letting more Mainers go without access to legal assistance. Whether they are victims of elder abuse, a case involving denial of benefits, or any other issue, it would be a great disservice if thousands of Mainers throughout the state lacked access to legal representation because of a deficiency in funding. In all 16 counties, we know that there are hundreds, if not thousands, of Maine people who need direct legal assistance and representation, something that this bill would ensure is available in coming fiscal years.

If we were to let this funding decrease to the baseline proposed in the budget, there will be direct harm to friends, neighbors, and at-risk individuals who rely on these services throughout the state to give them access to fair legal representation they would otherwise be unable to afford. Without the passage of LD 1022, we could witness more elderly Mainers being evicted from their home without legal representation, benefits being denied for our veterans who can't afford to talk to a lawyer, and further stress on a legal representation system that is already stretched thin throughout the state.

For these Maine people I have mentioned, and for so many more whose access to legal representation is at stake, I urge you to support the increase and stability of funding that LD 1022 represents.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify,

Grace McCarthy
Bowdoinham, Maine

