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AARP Maine Testimony in support of LD 60 An Act to Allow Employees to Request Flexible Work Schedules

Greetings Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and members of the Committee On Labor. 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. We thank Representative Roeder for bringing forward this bill and will be offering testimony in support of LD 60.

We are supportive of LD 60 as policy that can enable older Mainers to remain in the workforce and enable family caregivers to maintain employment and balance their care responsibilities. Flextime, flexplace, teleworking, and job-sharing are examples of flexible work options. They appeal to workers of all ages. These arrangements may enable people with health problems or disabilities to remain at work, and they can also encourage older workers to stay in the labor force longer. They may allow working caregivers to fulfill both their caregiving and paid-work responsibilities more easily.

In Maine, our older work force is mighty. There are approximately 260,000 workers in Maine who are 50+. Of that 72,200 are 65+. These numbers are expected to grow. Nationally the number of older workers is still projected to increase. This is because the number of older adults is growing, and labor force participation rates among older workers are expected to rise. Some older workers opt to delay retirement because they want to continue working. Others keep working because they cannot afford to retire. The Bureau of Labor Statistics still projects that those age 65 and older—traditionally retirement age—will be the fastest-growing age group in the workforce in the decade ahead.

A lack of flexible work arrangements can be a hindrance to older workers' continued employment. Many need to combine paid work with caregiving responsibilities and often face discrimination as a result of those responsibilities. Maine has 166,000 family caregivers and many of them work. Caregivers often provide care to a loved one that allows them to age in place, where they want to be. However, for those who work as well as

provide care, the demands can negatively impact the health, wellbeing and financial security of the caregiver. Flexible work arrangements can support working family caregivers by allowing them to work remotely when needed, or shift hours to take a loved one to an appointment. The fact is caring for a loved one shouldn't cost you your job. Allowing Mainers to request flexible work agreements may enable more caregivers to remain in the workforce and keep their loved one at home and out of a costly nursing facility.

It is our view that LD 60 will help protect older workers and family caregivers who want to remain in the workforce. We urge this committee to pass LD 60. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today, if you have further questions for me, I can be contacted at bquinn@aarp.org or at 207-272-8563.

Thank you,
Bridget Quinn
AARP Maine

