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Maine State Legislature
State and Local Government Committee
State House
Augusta, ME 04330

Honorable Senator Nangle, Representative Stover and members of the State and Local Government Committee:

My name is Darylen Cote. I am a resident of Caribou and a member of Maine's Permanent Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW), appointed to fill Seat #12 by Senate President, Troy Jackson. I have been a member for 5 years, and participate on this Commission due to a passion for and a long career in women's health, education, and as a social justice advocate for gender equity, opportunities and policies that lift people from poverty and improve the lives of women and girls in Maine. I am a 2019 inductee of the Maine Women's Hall of Fame.

In my capacity as a member of PCSW, please accept this letter of support for **LD794 – "An Act to Expand the Membership of the Permanent Commission on the Status Women.** I firmly believe that in order to be most effective, this commission must be broadly representative of Maine women, including youth and members of the LGBTQIA+ communities. Having long been excluded from serious consideration, these folks must be included to have a firm grasp on the needs of all Maine women and girls.

We also need to expand our capacity to do the research to offer relevant information to the governor, legislature and people of Maine. As volunteers, our time is limited by such issues as paid employment, family and community obligations. Most other states have paid professional staff to assist their PCSW's do the extensive work necessary to provide solid information upon which decisions may be made, and manage administrative functions. This support has been lacking in Maine, placing a tremendous burden on the commissioners to provide meaningful biannual reports to the governor and legislature.

Thank you for your consideration of the merits of LD794 and thank you to sponsor, Senator Vitelli as well as the co-sponsors of this bill. **Please support LD794.**

Sincerely,

Darylen Cote

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