



**TESTIMONY OF LEGAL SERVICES FOR THE  
ELDERLY IN SUPPORT OF LD 794: AN ACT TO  
EXPAND THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE  
PERMANENT COMMISSION ON THE STATUS  
OF WOMEN**

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March 31, 2023

Senator Nangle, Representative Stover, and esteemed members of the State and Local Government Committee, my name is Jill Randall, and I am the Helpline and Medicare Advocacy Services Director of Legal Services for the Elderly, also known as LSE.

I am also a member of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women in the seat that represents the interests of older women. I submit this testimony today in support of LD 794.

Legal Services for the Elderly (LSE) is a nonprofit corporation that was formed in 1974. LSE's mission is to provide free legal help to older people in Maine when their basic human needs are at stake. This includes shelter, food, health care, public benefits and safety. LSE also provides Medicare advocacy services to Mainers with Medicare.

I support LD 794 because it contains changes that are critical and fundamental to the work of the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women, also known as the PCSW. I thank Senator Eloise Vitell for sponsoring this important bill. It is critically important that the PCSW have members who represent diverse interests and experiences. Currently the PCSW is lacking important perspectives from LGBTQIA+ Mainers and from a Maine youth. This bill expands the PCSW to include these two important seats.

LD 794 also updates the language in the statute to use terminology to ensure that Mainers feel respected and represented, such as by replacing "elderly" with "older residents." Employing precise and proper language is foundational to the work of the PCSW to ensure inclusivity and respect. LSE is currently working toward a name change for these same reasons.

LD 794 also creates an Executive Director staff position for the Commission. The Commission has operated for many years without funding and very limited administrative support which has limited the Commission's work because it has been carried out by volunteer members, including myself. The Commission released reports on the status of Maine women in 2020 and 2022. But as the Commission researched and drafted these reports we were hampered by the lack of funding and capacity. Having a staff position would provide capacity for us to carry out our important work of researching issues impacting women and documenting those in a written report.

Therefore, not only does this bill allow for critical changes to the Commission, but also would enable us to execute our charge to the Maine Legislature. Thank you and please support LD 794.

Submitted by Jill Randall, Helpline and Medicare Advocacy Services  
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