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March 5, 2021

RE: LD 542 - An Act To Provide Support Services for Military Members Transitioning to Civilian Life in Maine

Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs:

My name is Matt Harmon and I am providing written testimony on behalf of MEMIC to testify in support of LD 542. I have worked for MEMIC for over 20 years and I currently serve as the Senior Vice President of the Claim Department. I also have familiarity with Boots2Roots as I have served on their Board of Directors for the past 18 months.

On behalf of MEMIC's 18,000 policyholders in Maine, I am asking for your support of LD 542. It is well-documented that Maine's greatest economic threat is our aging workforce. In 2015, deaths in Maine exceeded births, and the fastest growing segment of the population is in retirement or at the *end* of their careers.

In fact, the Maine Department of Labor projections show that 25% of our population will be over the age of 65 in just two years, and the group that is 35 to 64 will be smaller than it was in 2012. Our prime workforce is being hollowed out.

The bottom line is that we desperately need to replenish our workforce now.

Boot2Roots is proving that the veterans Maine needs are available. With a support system like Boots2Roots, their transition from military to civilian life will be faster and more successful than any other workforce program. And not only will they come to Maine to take advantage of this remarkable program, many will bring their families.

Your support of this program sends a message that you appreciate their military service but it also makes it clear that you recognize their talent.

As you have and will hear, Boot2Roots is building a track record of success with veterans that already have the skills, discipline and motivation to immediately help employers across Maine. This requested appropriation will help Boots2Roots scale up the work that they do and bring more qualified workers to Maine.

Again, on behalf of MEMIC and the 18,000 employers we represent, we hope you will endorse funding this promising program.

Respectfully,



Matthew H. Harmon
SVP, Claim Department