

Testimony of Kelley Kash, CEO, Maine Veterans' Homes

In Support Of

L.D. 588, "Resolve, To Study Veterans' Benefits in Maine"

March 5, 2021

Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo, and Members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of L.D. 588.

My name is Kelley Kash, and I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Maine Veterans' Homes. MVH was established by the Legislature in 1977 as a *body corporate* to provide long-term care services and support to Maine's eligible veterans and families. Our first Home opened in 1983. Today, we operate six facilities across the State and provide a broad range of skilled nursing care, long-term care, memory care, and assisted living services to approximately 500 residents daily.

We welcome and applaud this effort to improve upon the care and support of veterans. We are especially concerned about access, quality and affordability of care for our elderly and disabled veterans. We are also very concerned how shifting demographics, both in veteran and general populations, may impact care demand and delivery in the future. Veteran population is projected to decrease by 40 percent across the state by 2050, and by as much as 60% in some counties.¹ How can these veterans be best served with limited resources, especially veterans who reside in remote areas? What state and federal programs can assist to increase access to care and affordability?

We feel now is the time to start planning to meet the evolving needs for veterans care in the future. As the state's largest provider of long-term care services and support to veterans, we feel MVH should be included in this study. We would be willing and honored to participate.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.



Kelley J. Kash, Colonel, USAF, Medical Service Corps (Retired)
 Chief Executive Officer