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**LD 1111, "An Act To Update the Statutes Governing Membership of the Board of Trustees of the
Maine Veterans' Homes"
Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs**

April 5, 2021

Senator Luchini, Representative Caiazzo, and honorable members of the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee – my name is David Richmond, and I am the Director of the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services. I am here today to testify in support of LD 1111, "An Act To Update the Statutes Governing Membership of the Board of Trustees of the Maine Veterans' Homes."

Maine Veterans' Home was created as an independent, non-profit organization by the Maine Legislature in 1977 to provide long term care services to Maine's Veterans and eligible family members. They opened their first home in Augusta in 1983. Since then, they have established locations in Caribou, Scarborough, South Paris, Bangor and Machias.

LD 1111 amends the sections of M.R.S. 37-B pertaining to the Maine Veterans Homes in order to ensure that the best care for Maine's veterans can be ensured for years to come. The first provision of this proposed legislation is to make changes to the composition and Gubernatorial appointment process for the Board of Trustees. Over the last year, in consultation with both Maine Veterans Home and the administration, it became clear that the current law was outdated and does not promote a diverse search for best qualified candidates to serve in these positions. The proposed law ensures that veterans organizations have input into the proposed nominees, yet it also allows the flexibility to nominate candidates who may not necessarily be veterans but have other talents to bring to the Board such as a background in healthcare administration, facility management or finance. The complexity and impact of quality nursing home care has regrettably been on full display over the past year. Given this, I'm grateful to acknowledge the outstanding dedication the Maine Veterans Homes' administration and staff has demonstrated over the past year in keeping our veterans safe and ensuring quality long-term health care.

The other major change proposed by this legislation is to eliminate the requirement that the CEO of Maine Veterans Homes be an honorably discharged veteran. While we are incredibly fortunate to have the talents of veteran Kelley Kash currently serving as CEO, for the long-term success of the organization we must be able to ensure in the future that the most qualified person can be hired for this position given the complexity of administering a six-facility, statewide long-term care organization for Maine's veterans.

I thank you for hearing testimony on this bill and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.

Respectfully,

David A. Richmond
Director, Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services