

Testimony in Support of LD 2001
**“An Act to Fund and Support the Veterans Homes in Caribou and Machias and Require
Legislative Approval for the Establishment and Closure of Veterans Homes”**

Presented to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs

March 2, 2022

Senator Hickman, Representative Caiazzo, and members of the Committee on Veteran Affairs we are the Business Investment Group (BIG) from Caribou Maine. We perform economic development functions in Caribou and operate informally as a think tank / factfinder / incubator for potential businesses or projects which will ultimately increase the taxable valuation for the municipality. Our testimony is in favor of LD 2001.

While we understand Maine Veterans’ Homes (MVH) has a challenging mission of providing the long-term housing and health care needs of our aging veterans, the economic environment has changed significantly in recent years and specifically in the last two years. Because of this, an organization like MVH should be required to obtain legislative approval for the establishment or closure of a facility managed by their board. This would allow for the additional oversight and time which are required to solve their complicated problems.

Further, this bill provides emergency funding which will hopefully delay or at best reverse MVH’s impetuous decision to shutter the Caribou and Machias facilities.

The members of BIG are available to the stakeholders of the MVH Caribou facility to participate in any way possible to assist in keeping our Aroostook County veterans in their home and retaining the local employees as well preserving all the complementary economic benefits the MVH Caribou facility provides to our community.

Thank you.

John Swanberg, President
Dave Corriveau, Vice President
Paul Powers
Ken Murchison
Hugh A. Kirkpatrick
Troy Haney