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THE MAINE SENATE
129th Legislature

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Testimony in Support of LD 1758
An Act To Clarify and Amend MaineCare Reimbursement Provisions for Nursing and Residential Care Facilities
Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Senator Gratwick, Representative Hymanson and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services,

My name is Troy Jackson, I serve as President of the Maine Senate and have the great honor of representing Senate District 1, which is made up of the good people of Northern Aroostook County. I am here today to introduce LD 1758, "An Act To Clarify and Amend MaineCare Reimbursement Provisions for Nursing and Residential Care Facilities."

Growing older presents many opportunities but also many challenges. Whether our decline in health affects our ability to enjoy our usual hobbies, our ability to travel to be with friends and family, or our ability to take care of our own basic needs, aging means many of us need some extra help. We've worked all session on getting adequate health care to Mainers that doesn't depend on where you live, and the same is true for the care older Mainers depend on.

Maine has repeatedly recognized the value of quality nursing home care. The state requires high staffing standards and has made changes to funding methods as recently as last year. But clearly we need to do more: seven nursing homes have closed in just the last 15 months and others are struggling to pay their bills. Six of those closed in 2018, which caused 250 nursing home residents to be displaced and resulted in 400 people losing their jobs. These dedicated workers can't afford to go without pay, and elderly Mainers can't afford to go without care.

It is estimated that by 2030 the population of Mainers over 65 will increase by 47 percent. In 1995, Maine had 132 nursing homes, but today we only have 94. Representative Craven knows these problems well as the chair of the 2013 Commission to Study Long-term Care Facilities. That report specifically noted the ongoing need for adequate reimbursement for facilities to ensure access in both rural and urban areas.¹ As options for nursing home care decrease, so do the options for older Mainers to live out their final years in good health, in comfort, and close to their loved ones.

I look forward to working with all of you to help pass this legislation into law. Thank you for your consideration.

¹ <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Rbu5BurlBw5PB19U3oq-ppmaPKgBUTth/view?usp=sharing>