



Elder Abuse
Institute of Maine

Testimony of Patricia Kimball on Behalf of the Elder Abuse Institute of Maine

To Joint Standing Committee On Appropriations and Financial Affairs

In favor of LD 258: An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government

Greetings Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services.

My name is Patricia Kimball and I am the Executive Director of the Elder Abuse Institute of Maine. I am testifying today in support of the proposed appropriation for Elder Justice Investments which would include support for the Elder Service Connections program that my nonprofit runs. That program, along with others that are part of the proposal considered today, were among the top recommendations identified in the Elder Justice Roadmap, developed by a public-private partnership convened by the Governor with numerous stakeholders, including our organization.

The Elder Abuse Institute of Maine is a statewide nonprofit that serves older Mainers at risk for, or experiencing abuse, neglect or exploitation. We run several programs, including the one this appropriation would fund. Elder Service Connections provides community-based services for clients referred to us by Adult Protective Services.

It's the flagship program of the nationally recognized RISE model that was conceived of in Maine and first pilot tested in Cumberland and Aroostook counties beginning in 2019. The results exceeded even our hopes. Although APS refers its most intractable cases, our work with clients significantly decreases re-referrals.

APS workers like RISE because it augments their efforts with positive results for their clients. And clients too have very positive views of the program. We know this because it's one of the few programs around the country to collect outcomes data that researchers analyze.

Our Advocates work one-on-one with clients, state-wide, helping them to address their needs, and ensuring that their choice, autonomy and dignity are upheld. To date, we've served over 400 older Mainers. The program was built on established methods: we help our clients believe change is possible, we help build support around them so they're not so isolated and vulnerable. And if they want, we help them to repair relationships that have been breached.

The program's model and outcomes have been written up national journals. Other states want to replicate it, in part, because it's better for clients and for APS and in part because we believe it saves money over the long term by reducing the cost of cases boomeranging back to APS.

I have been doing this work for decades, and this is the most exciting and hopeful work of my career. Why? It's having a great relationship with APS. It's working with researchers, who study the impact of our work. And most of all, it's seeing our clients' being able to live better lives, with less suffering, even when most everyone has given up on them.

Older peoples' struggles are often invisible. They become isolated. They lack support networks, sometimes forcing them to depend on people who might harm them. There's so much we can do.

We help our clients find the right housing. Get food. Get connected with legal services and health care. It's a new more hopeful way of doing things that saves money and improves lives. I hope you will fund it.

Thank you.