



**Testimony of Marge Kilkelly on Behalf of
the Maine Council on Aging to the
Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs**

**NFNA LD 929 - An Act to Increase Access to Medical
Cannabis for Seniors and Veterans**

Submitted March 24, 2025

Greetings, Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and the members of the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs.

My name is Marge Kilkelly, and I am a Policy Consultant for the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA) which is a broad, multidisciplinary network of over 140 organizations, businesses, municipalities, and older community members working to ensure we can all live healthy, engaged, and secure lives with choices and opportunities as we age at home and in community settings. The MCOA is a unifying force across sectors that is creating a new narrative about aging and older people in Maine with the goal of building local, statewide, and national support for the systemic changes needed to support our new longevity.

I apologize that this legislation only recently came to my attention and I did not provide testimony at the hearing.

MCOA is Neither For / Nor Against the concept of **LD 929 An Act to Increase Access to Medical Cannabis for Seniors and Veterans**, however, we are adamantly opposed to Sec. 2 48-A the creation of the term “Senior” in Maine statute.

Sec. 2. 22 MRSA §2421-A, sub-§48-A is enacted to read:

48-A. Senior. "Senior" means an individual who is 65 years of age or older.

In 2022, The Maine Council on Aging announced it would work to end ageism in Maine by 2032. People are living longer than ever before but our thinking about aging and older people hasn't changed, and our communities, institutions, and systems haven't caught up to support our new old age. MCOA supports a robust age-inclusive state and works to address what is holding us back from embracing aging as a lifetime journey of learning, growth, and health and how a shift in perspective can propel us to positive action that can transform our workplaces, communities and economy.

Language is a key to that vision. We appreciate that change is hard and know that language such as “senior” is intended as benign or even positive, but it does inadvertently perpetuate negative attitudes.

As you deliberate this legislation we ask you to consider substituting Older Individual for the term Senior.

48-A. Older individuals Senior. "~~Senior~~" Older Individuals means an individual who is 65 years of age or older.

Thank you for your consideration.