

**To Chairpersons Anne Carney, Matt Moonen, and the members of the Judiciary Committee**

- My name is Bruce Blackmer from Dedham Maine.
- I am on the Executive Committee of the Greater Bangor Apartment Owners and Managers Association, GBAOMA.
- I am also a member of the Legislative Council representing landlords and property owners in, but not limited to, Waterville, Augusta, Portland, South Portland, Lewiston, Auburn, and the Bangor areas.
- I have been a landlord since 1972. I have owned a 50-unit trailer park , multi-units, and single-family homes. At one time, I managed 65 units. I have mostly provided affordable housing to low-income tenants.
- I do not believe a landlord who is practicing due diligence in screening a prospective tenant, for the protection of the other tenants, from a potentially disruptive tenant, should be presumed guilty of discrimination, for refusing to rent to them. My motto is that I have never evicted a good tenant.
- I am a typical Mainer. I am independent, honest, hard-working, and treat people fairly. As an independent Mainer, I do not like being told how to run my business, especially when the suggested changes only put a strain on the landlord/tenant relationship. Landlords usually don't earn a lot of money from rentals. Hopefully, the value of the buildings increase, evictions are at a minimum, and eventually the buildings are sold for a long-term capital gain, and the landlord can retire.
- Because of the eviction moratorium in 2020, when a tenant voluntarily left, I let the unit remain vacant. I was afraid I would get a bad tenant and I would not be able to evict them. Meanwhile, I may lose good tenants because of the bad tenant. In order to make up for the loss of rental income, I actually went back to driving a school bus. Yes, I would rather deal with 50 kids, than be stuck with a bad tenant. You see, school buses have rules. If a child misbehaves on a bus, he or she gets a warning and then if the child

continues to misbehave, the child is not allowed to ride the bus for a week or more. This is in sharp contrast to a misbehaving tenant. The child learns that they must change their behavior and obey the rules in order to ride the bus. With a tenant, I have to serve a 30-day notice, wait for a court date, and deal with Pine Tree Legal to help mediate the problem, only to evict the tenant after a long, drawn-out process. Unfortunately, many tenants feel that they have a right to housing, and the rules do not apply to them. Therefore, they feel they are the victims in an eviction and refuse to change their behavior.

- I grew up poor. I shared a bedroom with four older sisters and no indoor plumbing. I understand tough times. I don't mind giving someone a helping hand. However, too many people today want a hand-out. They have been paid not to work. If they are unemployed, they are not required to look for a job while they collect unemployment. Covid has changed numerous things including housing. However, the solution to the housing shortage is not to make war on landlords, and take away their rights to run their business, protect their property and the other tenants. Let's go back to pre-Covid times!
- I do not feel that it is discrimination against an evicted tenant, if it is discovered that the tenant was evicted for a just reason, and they may not have learned from the experience.
- **So, if you haven't guessed, I am here to ask you to OPPOSE LD 557, as well as LD 45, LD 558, LD 691, LD 701, and LD 804 when they come up for review.**
- Thank you for allowing me to voice my opinion. I would be happy to answer any questions.

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