

Testimony Regarding LD 3

Good morning Honorable Committee Members. I am Pedro A. Vazquez, current chair of the South Portland Human Rights Commission, living on unceded Wabanaki land now known as South Portland. I am speaking in favor of LD 3, An Act to Establish the Winter Energy Relief Payment Program to Aid Residents with High Heating Costs and to Finalize the COVID Pandemic Relief Payment Program. I will be brief.

My understanding of the legislative process is that it is meant to provide benefits and obligations to all affected citizens. That is the job of this body. The people of this state have been ravaged by the effects of this enduring tripledemic. Many are forced to make impossible decisions choosing between food, shelter, and heat. You have the means and the authority to provide relief to real human beings in these circumstances. You also have the moral obligation to do so as fellow human beings. Voting against LD3 or operating as an instrument to block it makes you a Grinch, a Scrooge, or even a Hans Gruber. And while those are fictional and sometimes amusing characters, think for a moment today about the undisputable fact that people will suffer and some will die in Maine this winter if you fail to support LD3 or stand in its way.

Today I'm here to encourage you to take measures to prevent this unnecessary suffering and loss of life by supporting LD3. Look within yourself individually and resolve whatever political posturing is preventing you from acting from a place of love for your fellow human beings.

As a State that is a leader in seeking a more equitable society, we have an ethical obligation to be what we say we are. For the Legislature this is particularly important since your policies and decisions affect all of us in Maine. I (we) urge you to support LD3.

Thank you.

Pedro A. Vazquez

371 Ocean Street

South Portland, Maine 04106

407-719-0922

vazquezpedroa@gmail.com