

Tom Ryan
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LD 3

Good afternoon. With respect to the \$450 heating assistance discussion/debate/vote, I'm hoping you'll consider the following points in your deliberations. It seems to me that the eligibility requirements are a bit generous. Qualitatively, I support keeping families warm throughout the winter months, myself having been a recipient of Low Income heating assistance in my past.

Considering the income-based eligibility only, why resident Mainers who spend the winters in warmer climates would be eligible for assistance if they aren't here to use heat?

Why shouldn't members of this chamber who are eligible themselves for this assistance recuse themselves from voting? There seems to be a conflict of interest in voting on something that would benefit the member.

Based on the eligibility, two taxpayers (married, filing jointly, etc.) in the same household who seemingly would use the same amount of heat each appear to be eligible. Why would the household assistance be doubled?

And lastly, I guess I just have a hard time believing that residents who earn \$99,999/year wouldn't be able to meet their heating needs.

As a potential solution, I'd propose reducing the household income eligibility to \$65,000, and earmarking funds to be delivered through an application process based on income and previous heat usage.