

I wish to testify on LD3.

Years ago I discovered, by looking at exceedingly high electric bills, that I was paying my landlord's portion of heat and electricity. When I complained to her, I was told that if I didn't like it, I should move. I offer this as an example of the unequal power that landlords have over their tenants.

To be explicitly clear: No one should ever be forced to choose between food and housing, heat and housing, medicine and housing, etc. Housing is *not* just another commodity to be bought and sold to the highest bidder. Rather, it can provide dignity and respect for adults and safety for children. It is a moral commitment and societal pact that any civilized society must make. As a young adult I spent a homeless week on the streets in an unfamiliar city. I was finally befriended by a stranger who arranged for housing. I traded some of my few possessions for a trip home and a little food. No committee, no government organization should ever allow this to happen. No landlord should ever be permitted to facilitate homelessness. Yet this is what is happening in our great state of Maine. No, it's not all about the landlords' or taxpayers' money. Government is here to serve the people, whether they are poor or something else. If our laws are not in place to *ensure* that this is occurring, then our government must step in with emergency legislation. For now, we must act morally with taxpayer money and our constituents while better policies and laws are put in place in the background.

I wholeheartedly urge you to pass LD3 which will give people and government time to formulate better solutions for our heating and housing crisis.

Thanks for your attention to these important matters.

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