

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and members of the Committee On Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business,

I am Barbara Maurais, a resident of Windham. Thank you to Representative Fay of Raymond for sponsoring **LD 666, An Act to Support Community-based Volunteer Organizations**. I am submitting this testimony in **SUPPORT** of LD 666.

I am currently serving on the board of directors of Windham Neighbors Helping Neighbors, a community based, volunteer non-profit 501 c3 organization. Our mission is to provide one-time emergency assistance to Windham residents experiencing a critical need for fuel, help direct individuals to appropriate long-term resources, and promote a culture of neighbors helping neighbors. As coordinator of our annual Facebook auction and a member of our yearly Gala, I have seen our community members donate products, items, services, and money so that our neighbors in need can receive emergency fuel assistance. The contributions, both large and small, are local, consistent, and demonstrate the care and concern that our residents have for those in need. This model works, and we are fortunate that back in 2007 our Windham legislative team of Bill Diamond, Gary Plummer, and Mark Bryant worked with other key residents of Windham to establish our non-profit and build a solid foundation that has grown over the years.

In 2010, I was honored to be one of the founding members of MaineLyme, a non-profit group whose mission was to decrease the prevalence of Lyme Disease and other tick-borne diseases through education and awareness. We were six individuals who saw a need for advocacy, and we created the non-profit from scratch. With few resources on how to properly build the organization, scrounging anywhere we could get information, and without a template, it took us agonizing months to get the non-profit established.

Please support LD 666 so that more small, community based, volunteer non-profits could be created by having access to technical resource and skill development available to them through the Department of Economic and Community Development so that more local organizations could be established throughout the state. We know that the model works, we know that Mainers are frugal; to me it makes sense that we provide tools so that more Maine residents can benefit from community-based supports. In these non-profit groups, the monies raised go directly to folks in need, with no paid staff. I believe that the benefit to local communities who are able to establish similar nonprofits would have a great impact with a very small cost.

I appreciate the work that Representative Fay and others have done in supporting our volunteer non-profit boards and thank her for submitting the bill.

Thank you for your consideration.

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