

Terry Sutton
Portland
LD 2

Senator Pierce and Representative Gere and members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing: my name is Terry Sutton, I live in Portland and am a board member of Preble Street. I am submitting my testimony in favor of LD2.

Site-based Housing First has been proven to successfully move the chronically homeless into supportive housing and have them stay housed. Not only is this important for the health and well-being of these residents but it also reduces the strain on medical/ER capacity, police calls and public health.

Maine is facing a crisis of homelessness and the State's support for this critical solution will help address this growing need. We cannot depend solely on the non-profit agencies to solve this issue...there simply aren't enough resources to meet the need.

The key to success in housing first is the "site-based" aspect which includes 24x7 social work support. It's not enough to create housing for the homeless...we need to provide them with this support in order for them to remain successfully housed. And we know that the "low-barrier" approach is critical to getting them housed. We can't set requirements on being sober, etc. The experience we've had with the Housing First approach shows that the chronically homeless can and will recover and be able to remain housed once we bring them into a safe and supportive space.

I hope you can help us move forward by advocating for this bill...it will save lives!