



Testimony before the Committee on Housing
LD 2: An Act to Address Maine's Housing Crisis
April 4, 2023

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere and Members of the Committee:

I am Rev. Jane Field, Executive Director of the Maine Council of Churches. The Council has seven member-denominations and two associate member congregations who represent 437 local churches in Maine with 55,000 parishioners. I am testifying on behalf of the Council **in support of LD 2.**

All of our churches have roots in Hebrew and Christian scripture, where the foundation of morality is love of neighbor as self and where covenant with God includes caring for our vulnerable and marginalized neighbors while building a society where people nurture and protect one another and ensure that everyone has a safe place to dwell. The biblical moral imperative for justice compels us to go beyond compassion and charity and respond to the homelessness crisis by empowering people to move from homelessness to hope.

LD 2 is a way to do just that. It would provide funding for 24-hour supportive services that make "Site-based Housing First" a successful solution for the most vulnerable Mainers who have complex needs and experience chronic homelessness in both rural and urban parts communities in our state.

Site-based Housing First is especially effective for highly vulnerable populations, including the chronically homeless, people sleeping outside, and people with untreated mental and behavioral health and/or substance use disorders because once people are safe and supported by 24-hour onsite social work staff in permanent housing, they can stabilize and work toward a more fulfilling and independent future; including addressing substance use disorder, focusing on health, education, or employment, and rebuilding relationships with friends and family.

That is the definition of caring for our vulnerable and marginalized neighbors and building a society where Mainers nurture and protect one another, ensure that every Mainer has a safe place to dwell, and empower them to move from homelessness to hope.

For these reasons, the Maine Council of Churches joins our trusted partner organization, Preble Street, in urging you to vote OUGHT TO PASS on LD 2.

Jane Field
Maine Council of Churches
LD 2

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