

Testimony in Support of LD 226
"An Act to Address Maine's Affordable Housing Crisis"

Good morning Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing. My name is Scott Harriman, I'm a resident of Lewiston, and I am testifying today in support of LD 226, "An Act to Address Maine's Affordable Housing Crisis."

All across the state of Maine people are struggling to afford a place to live. Our historic lack of investment in affordable housing (and housing in general) has created a situation where we simply do not have enough housing units to meet demand. This, in turn, leads to huge spikes in cost for both renters and home buyers.

For example, my home in downtown Lewiston has more than doubled in value since I was fortunate enough to purchase it just over five years ago. I've also seen rents in my neighborhood go up by 50% or more in the same time period. Many people are spending one third, one half or even more of their income just on a place to live.

A safe and affordable home provides the stability that allows everything else in our lives to happen: adults holding down a job, children succeeding in schools, seniors enjoying their retirement, and people of all ages maintaining their health and wellbeing.

Besides the fact that every Mainer deserves an affordable place to live, this issue also has economic implications. As our population ages out of the workforce we need to attract and retain younger people if we want to maintain the level of services that we are used to. If people cannot afford to live here then we will all lose out on the benefits that a productive, talented workforce provides.

Maine can help fix this problem by building as many affordable housing units as we can over the next several years, a task which would be helped immensely by the funding that this bill provides. Please help address our housing crisis by voting Ought To Pass on LD 226. Thank you for your time and for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

Scott A. Harriman (he/him)
Lewiston, Maine
harriman.scott@gmail.com