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Testimony of Senator Mattie Daughtry introducing
**LD 1282, An Act to Streamline Income Verification Requests for Income
Supplementation and Assistance Programs**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services
April 19, 2023

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and Esteemed Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Mattie Daughtry, and I proudly represent Senate District 23, which includes Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, Pownal, Chebeague Island, and part of Yarmouth. Today I am pleased to introduce LD 1282, “An Act to Streamline Income Verification Requests for Income Supplementation and Assistance Programs.”

At the end of last year, Brunswick Housing Director John Hodge contacted me and asked me to submit legislation that would help municipal housing authorities verify household income as a means of determining eligibility and housing subsidies. John is here today, so I know that he will be able to share his experience and perspective on this issue. But basically, many households whose primary source of income is TANF must be verified by DHHS. The time it takes for a verification request varies from office to office; sometimes, there is no response at all. These delays cause many problems for residents and staff. That’s why we’d like to grant direct electronic access to these records, similar to access already granted for criminal background checks and motor vehicle registrations. If we make this change, then we could save time for housing authority and DHHS staff – and ensure that delays don’t prevent people from accessing benefits or services.

In the time since the bill was drafted, referred to committee, and scheduled for a public hearing, I have heard requests from stakeholders to expand the scope of this bill. I’d like to introduce a sponsor’s amendment that would accomplish the following:

- Under **Income verification requests by state and local authorities**, I would like to add “or affordable housing organizations, which would include any federally or state-subsidized property or property subject to rent restrictions per local, state or federal mandate.”
- Under **Income verification requests by state and local authorities**, I would like to add the Public Utilities Commission. The PUC helps administer the Low-Income Assistance Program (LIAP), and eligibility for this program is based on a customer’s eligibility in the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and/or participation in a

DHHS means-tested program with a household income at or less than 75% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

I thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have, but I hope that you'll save some of the more specific ones for John Hodge.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mattie".

Mattie Daughtry

Assistant Senate Majority Leader, Senate District 23

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