



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1400
TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

Rebecca Millett

50 Market St., Ste 1A PMB 162
South Portland, ME 04106
Residence: (207) 415-3770
Rebecca.Millett@legislature.maine.gov

May 5, 2023

Testimony of Rep. Rebecca Millett supporting

LD 1426, An Act to Secure Housing for the Most Vulnerable Maine Residents by Amending the Laws Governing Municipal General Assistance

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Good morning, Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services. My name is Rebecca Millett, and I represent House District 123, which makes up most of Cape Elizabeth. Thank you for the opportunity to come before you as a cosponsor in support of **LD 1426, An Act to Secure Housing for the Most Vulnerable Maine Residents by Amending the Laws Governing Municipal General Assistance**. I am grateful to my colleague Rep. Kristi Mathieson for bringing this bill forward.

Many times, as I've sat on my local school board, chaired the Children's Caucus and served on the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, I've heard from educators about how they find themselves being asked to solve some of society's most difficult problems, fundamental issues that they can't truly address in the classroom, as they try to educate our kids.

Our educators know that, in order to succeed in school and in their lives, children and families need their most basic needs to be met. But far too many families are struggling to meet those basic needs, unable to afford a safe, stable home or to put enough food on the table, preventing them from reaching their full potential and putting them at risk for a host of harmful outcomes. This is the perspective with which I approach our work in the Legislature to tackle the interconnected challenges that face our state.

We have a lot of work to do to address these issues in the longer term, but one of our first orders of business should be ensuring that our most universal safety net, the General Assistance

Program, is strong enough to protect vulnerable Mainers while we as policymakers race to put durable solutions in place. That is what LD 1426 aims to do.

LD 1426 increases reimbursements to the municipalities that administer this important program and ensures that local officials receive training. It also increases the state resources available to those local officials, providing them with an around-the-clock hotline and timely responses to requests. Finally, it brings assistance levels more in line with other programs and, more importantly, the reality that Mainers face.

Let's commit to ensuring that all Mainers – our children and families, our older adults, everyone – have a safe place to call home and the support they need to thrive. We can begin to show that commitment today by supporting LD 1426.

Thank you for your consideration.