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May 5, 2023

Re: LD 1664, An Act to Increase Reimbursement Under the General Assistance Program

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Cullen Ryan, and I am the Executive Director of Community Housing of Maine (CHOM). CHOM houses Maine's most vulnerable people and advocates on behalf of these broader populations. I am a member of the Statewide Homeless Council and also chair the Maine Homeless Policy Committee and the Maine Continuum of Care Board of Directors.

My testimony is in support of LD 1664, An Act to Increase Reimbursement Under the General Assistance Program. *This bill increases, from 70% to 90%, the amount of state reimbursement for the costs of General Assistance (GA) incurred by municipalities in Maine.*

If we do one thing with GA in this Legislative Session, increasing the reimbursement rate to 90% would be best. It is the most significant change we can make to create equity and ensure that people are served within their home communities.

The financial burden caused by the current reimbursement rate is too much of a barrier for most municipalities to overcome, causing people to leave their communities for larger service center areas.

I am hopeful the 131st Legislature will make this important fix.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.