

Testimony in Opposition to LD1710

My name is Scott Lawliss and I oppose LD1710. I'm a medium sized landlord with units in Bangor, Brewer and Winterport. I also represent the GBAOMA (Greater Bangor Apartment Owners and Managers Association) as its President. GBAOMA has approximately 650 memberships. We are composed of primarily small landlords. We are typically, hardworking small business people who own a few rental units as an investment for retirement.

It is important to remember that we, as Landlord's house many thousands of Bangor residents in safe, well-maintained reasonably affordable apartments. Our tenants are comprised of people from all income levels. We are a huge part of the solution to Bangor's housing problem.

LD 1710 would undermine our ability to provide that housing. It would encourage landlords to look for loopholes in order to avoid the restrictions it imposes. It would also force landlords to sign contracts against their will; something that seems like it should be illegal in this state or this country. Most importantly, it would seriously discourage new development; seemingly a bad idea when there is such a shortage of housing in this state.

The landlords of Bangor house people from all walks of life in Bangor. We have plenty of low- and middle-income tenants. We have tenants with vouchers and other subsidies. We have lots of tenants with blemishes in their background including criminal records, bankruptcies, prior evictions and lots of other issues. We have many Landlords of all sizes that house low-income and subsidized tenants. Some landlords specialize in this business and some, like myself, have low-income tenants as a part of their over-all portfolio. That said, housing lower income and subsidized tenants is a very different business than housing well employed tenants with good credit. The former requires much more management, monitoring and sometimes enforcement. Many landlords are intimidated by that. I appreciate that the state would like to see more housing for the low-sector. There are many good programs designed to encourage that. In fact, Penquis Cap is currently promoting a new program to do just that. We are working with them by allowing them to present to our membership next month at our general meeting.

LD1710 will exacerbate the homeless problem by discouraging development and driving small landlords out of the business. Its important to remember that all development helps the housing crisis. If a developer in Bangor wanted to build 100 units for the well-employed healthcare workers in this town who are also having a hard time finding a place to live, everyone benefits. The new tenants benefit as they can now find an apartment. The developer benefits because investment works and they will be

encouraged to do it again. The low- and middle-income tenants benefit because there is now less pressure on the existing housing stock. The city benefits as they have new taxable property and happier workers. LD1710 would undermine all of this.

Thank you for your consideration.

Scott Lawliss

GBAOMA – President
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