

Written Testimony addressed to the
Joint Select Committee on Housing in support of LD1844
Cross Building, Rm 216
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Mary Connolly
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Brunswick, MAINE

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To Chair Senator Teresa Pierce and Chair Representative Traci Grere,

My name is Mary Connolly, Executive Director of The Gathering Place. I am testifying on behalf of myself and my community in support of this legislation. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of LD1844, *An Act to Support Emergency Housing Facility Construction, Renovation and Acquisition Statewide by Creating a Matching Grant Program*, which would greatly improve the quality of life for many Mainers statewide.

I live in Brunswick Maine, where the number of people experiencing homelessness is large and the need for emergency shelter remains. I support emergency shelter organizations across the state, and support any expansion of their services and programs to members of my community that are in need.

Housing organizations around the state would be able to serve more people experiencing homelessness in their local communities if the state rewarded their fundraising and expansion efforts with a State-funded matching program. The emergency housing provider for my town and the southern midcoast region is Tedford Housing. Last year, Tedford served over 550 people facing housing insecurity and I know they would be able to serve significantly more of our neighbors if this bill passes.

Emergency housing needs to play a critical, larger role in solving our housing crisis, but it has been neglected by other legislation that aims to address the problem. This bill offers a meaningful step in filling in that gap.

Nobody plans to become homeless. When a family or individual's life stability is threatened by the financial impact of a medical emergency, divorce, death of a wage earner, or loss of job, emergency housing is a key tool in maintaining their stability and self-sufficiency. Please vote Ought to Pass on LD 1844, so Maine's emergency shelters can do their part in building a healthy, productive populace.

Thank you for your consideration.

Mary Connolly
Executive Director
The Gathering Place