



## Testimony

In support of LD 2136, An Act to Provide Financial Support for Shelters for Unhoused  
Individuals

Before the Joint Select Committee on Housing

January 23, 2024

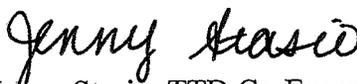
Representative Mastraccio and distinguished members of the Housing Committee, my name is Jenny Stasio, and I am writing on behalf of Through These Doors, in support of LD 2136 and the need for financial support for shelters for unhoused individuals in Maine.

Through These Doors is Maine's domestic violence resource center in Cumberland County, the only holistic resource center for victims of domestic abuse in the county. Incorporated in 1977, shelter for survivors of abuse and their children was our first service. Since then, we have grown and expanded to meet the complex and varied needs of survivors of abuse but the need for safe, emergency shelter has remained and steadily increased over the years. During the pandemic, Through These Doors received unprecedented requests for emergency shelter.

Through These Doors is always at capacity. Survivors of abuse call our helpline every day inquiring about shelter space which infrequently is available and when it is, filled within minutes. It is a scary, frustrating, and hopeless process for many survivors of abuse. Funding to keep our shelter functioning optimally as the costs of maintaining our shelter facility and accompanying services increases is imperative to our continued success as a haven for individuals and families fleeing abuse and violence in their homes. Through These Doors is committed to ending and preventing homelessness in Maine for survivors of abuse but this work requires a sufficiently funded emergency shelter system to do so.

One survivor we recently worked with shared the following: *I am currently fleeing DV, and it is not safe to give my name. Without the assistance of Through These Doors I would be living in my car with my daughter. I called the helpline, and not only did I receive shelter, I was connected to a housing navigator who helped me apply for a housing voucher. My navigator helped me find an apartment and is working with me and the landlord. I will soon be in my own apartment.*

Thank you for your attention to our testimony and thoughtful consideration of LD 2136. On behalf of Through These Doors and the survivors of abuse we serve, please support this bill to ensure that survivors of abuse and others experiencing homelessness have the essential services when and where they need them.

  
Jenny Stasio, TTD Co-Executive Director