



Consumer Council System of Maine
A Voice for Consumers of Mental Health Services

219 Capitol Street, Suite 7
Augusta, ME 04330

Phone: 207.430.8300
Fax: 207.430.8301
Toll-Free: 877.207.5073
www.maineccsm.org

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Good day, Senator Pierce, Representative Gere and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing.

My name is Simonne Maline. I am the Executive Director for the Consumer Council System of Maine (CCSM). I am writing on behalf of the CCSM to testify in support of both **LD 2136 “An Act to Provide Financial Support for Shelters for Unhoused Individuals and LD 2138 “ Resolve, to Improve Funding for Homeless Shelters”**

The Consumer Council System of Maine is a public instrumentality written into State Statute by the Maine Legislature to serve in an advisory capacity and to provide legislators with guidance and advice regarding the delivery of effective and appropriate adult mental health services from those served by them.

In our statewide work, when speaking with individuals with mental health challenges, often both housed and those who are unhoused especially now, are at the top of the list regarding need. We cannot emphasize this enough!

While our hope in Maine is that we move more to individualized housing and supports (if needed and wanted). Thinking we might not need shelters for the unhoused, that is not the reality we are living in today. Shelters play a pivotal role for individuals moving forward out of such dire situations.

We see the problems we face today as justice issues. Those who live in poverty, those who may struggle with mental health and substance use challenges are marginalized and often neglected. It is our societal and moral obligation to look right into the faces of those living with extreme hardships and offer all that we can to support them.

This is also a public health crisis that has exploded since the pandemic. It is easy to become numb to seeing tents, folks sleeping outside and standing in the lines for food support. We must not allow this to happen and should treat these situations as health-related issues.

We urge you to support the financial infrastructure needed to meet these individuals where they are and bring them inside if they so choose.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Simonne Maline

Executive Director