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February 26, 2024

To: Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
From: Through These Doors
Re: LD 2214

Testimony in Opposition to LD 2214, Part II
Limiting municipalities from exceeding maximum levels of emergency general assistance

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, on behalf of Through These Doors, I write in opposition to Part II of LD 2214, which seeks to amend the municipal general assistance statute to limit municipalities from exceeding maximum levels of assistance past 30 days in a 12-month period for any household.

Through These Doors is the domestic violence resource center serving victims and survivors of abuse in Cumberland County. One of our core services is an emergency shelter for victims and survivors of abuse experiencing homelessness. Our shelter has a capacity of sixteen beds and is always at capacity, in fact, we turn people away in need of safe shelter every day.

Through These Doors is concerned about the unintended consequences of Part II of LD 2214, if enacted as written. This change would result in an unsustainable increase in the cost of providing emergency shelter. The cost of providing emergency shelter has risen in the past year and we are concerned that LD2214, Part II may result in a reduction in shelter capacity, due to the consequential increase in operating costs.

Through These Doors suggests introducing a carve-out for shelters that receive funding from MaineHousing, allowing those shelters to exceed the maximum rate by 100% and be exempt from the 30-day limit. This would allow Part II of LD 2214 to do what it is intended to do by clarifying the purpose of general assistance and managing the cost of municipal implementation while not decreasing funds for emergency shelters.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jenny Stasio'.

Jenny Stasio, Co-Executive Director