

January 21, 2025

Good afternoon,

My name is Katherine Waite and I have been a resident of Kenduskeag, Maine for sixteen years. I have also served in various capacities of municipal government over the past several years. I have witnessed the financial and social impact of municipal general assistance programs, and I have seen how they affect my local community and the State at large.

I am writing today to testify in support of LD 209, Part S concerning general assistance limitations. The law defines general assistance as a program not intended to be a continuing welfare fund. General assistance was intended to help with basic necessities for a defined amount of time (i.e. 30 days). Currently, the law does not allow us to define a time limit on housing assistance received. The unintended consequence of this is the incentivization to make little or no progress towards self-sufficiency, while draining local and state resources.

Supporting limitations on housing assistance reiterates the foundational value of the general assistance program being an emergency program—not a continuing welfare program. It incentivizes the unemployed/underemployed to make gainful steps towards self-sufficiency, while valuing the taxpayer's dollar at a local and state level.

I urge you to support LD 209 Part S and allow for limitations on housing assistance.

Respectfully,

Katherine Waite
Town of Kenduskeag